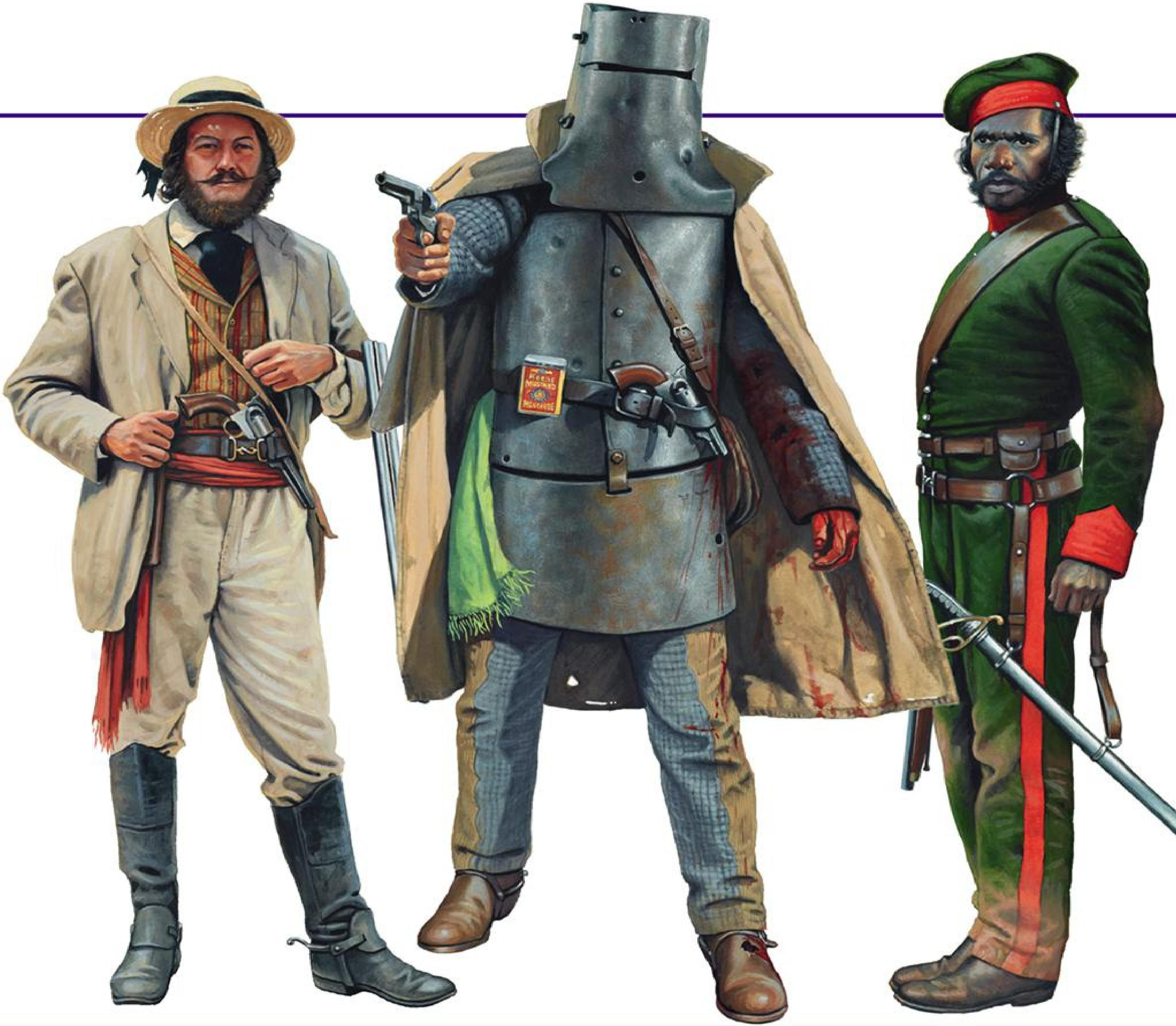
Men-at-Arms

Australian Bushrangers 1788–1880



Ian Knight • Illustrated by Mark Stacey

Men-at-Arms • 525

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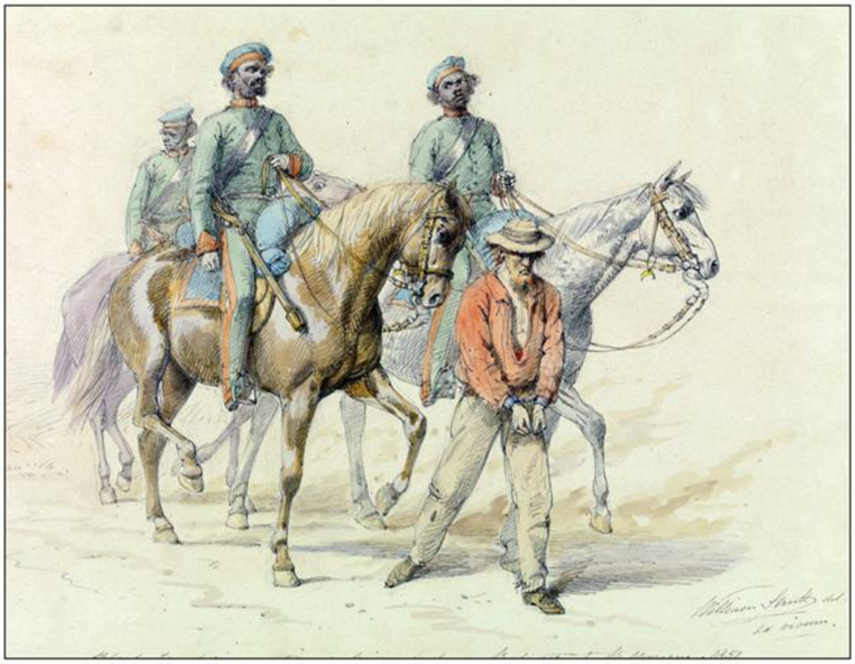

Ian Knight * Illustrated by Mark Stacey

Series editor Martin Windrow

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PLATE COMMENTARIES

AUSTRALIAN BUSHRANGERS 1788–1880

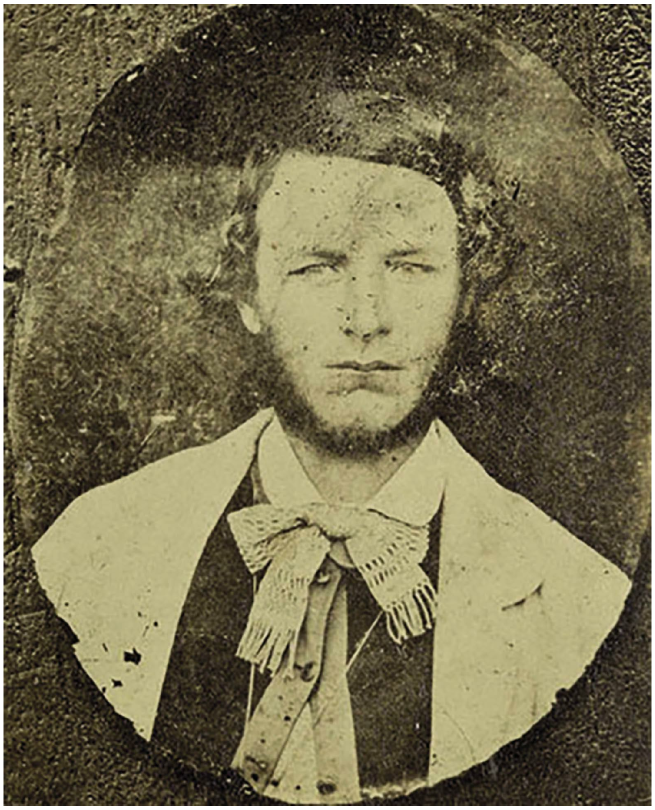
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The First Fleet and the 'transportation' system

On 26 January 1788, a fleet of 11 British ships carrying more than 1,500 people landed at Sydney Cove on the south-eastern coast of Australia, with the intention of creating a new British colony on the far side of the world.

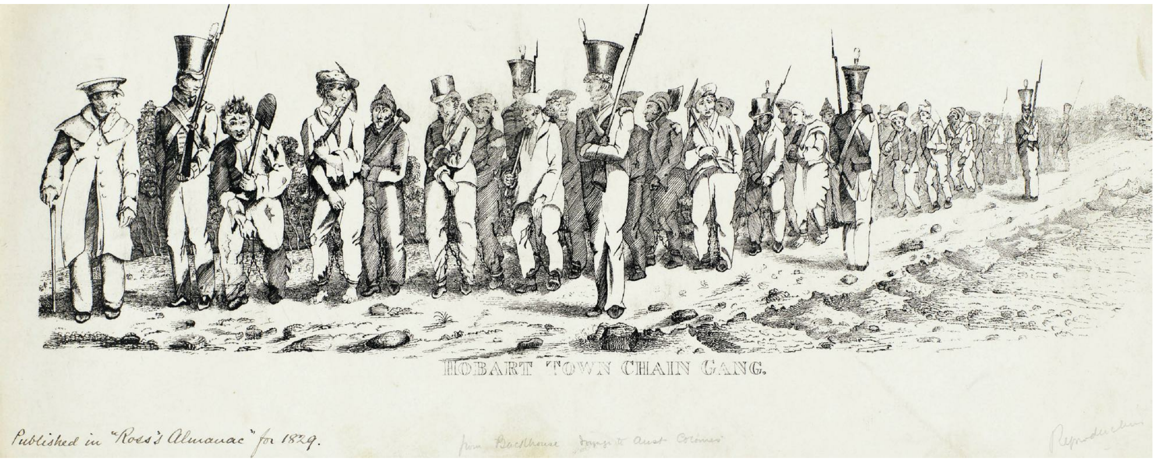
European mariners had been aware of the great *Terra Australis Incognita*, 'the Unknown Land of the South', since the 1600s, but it was not until 1770 that the British navigator Capt James Cook had audaciously laid claim to the eastern part of Australia on behalf of the British Crown (naturally ignoring the presence of an indigenous population). The sheer distance from Britain, requiring a six-month voyage, made settlement and any exploration of Australia's economic potential difficult, but the arrival of that 'First Fleet' in 1788 signalled a shift in Britain's global strategy. The loss of the greater part of the North American colonies after the recent Revolutionary War had encouraged Britain to look further afield for new territories, both to provide resources and to counter any strategic threat from rival European colonialist powers.

The colonization of Australia was unusual, even for experienced empire-builders like the British. That first fleet of settlers did not include traders, farmers or artisans – the usual cross-section of capabilities needed to exploit a foothold in new lands – but instead more than 730 convicted criminals, banished from their homeland. Banishment as a legal punishment in Britain was not new – 'transportation' had been a frequent sentence for more than a hundred years – but until the Revolutionary War, Britain had transported most of its convicts to North America. Transportation was seen as a humane alternative to execution (which was then the sentence for a shockingly wide range of crimes), and also as a means of expelling a troublesome element from national life. Most of the crimes for which the convicts were transported were not serious by modern standards, and usually involved various degrees of theft. What was new about the Australian experience was an element of social experimentation – an attempt to turn supposedly bad elements to the greater good of the Empire, without the need to commit other resources, and by doing so to encourage their personal redemption.



A studio portrait of Ben Hall (1837–1865), one of the most famous of the New South Wales bushrangers of the 1860s. Here he is wearing a pale jacket over a coloured waistcoat and a large necktie tied in the flamboyant fashion of the day; see also reconstruction as **Plate D1**. Hall was eventually hunted down while camping out in the bush, and died under a hail of police bullets. (State Library, New South Wales)

The First Fleet was the beginning of a process which lasted until 1868. Both men and women were transported (between 1788 and 1792 alone over 3,500 male and 760 female convicts were landed at Sydney Cove), and when women were sentenced their children were often sent with them into exile. Most transported convicts were not sentenced to perpetual servitude, but in time could earn their readmission to civil society. Sentences were usually for seven or 14 years of penal servitude, though in the most serious cases they might be ‘for the term of their natural life’. Once the sentence had expired prisoners were legally free to return home, but since no means were provided for their passage most of them had little choice but to remain in the colony.


HOBART TOWN CHAIN GANG.
Published in "Ross's Almanac" for 1829.
from Backhouse [illegible] Aust Colonies
Reproduction

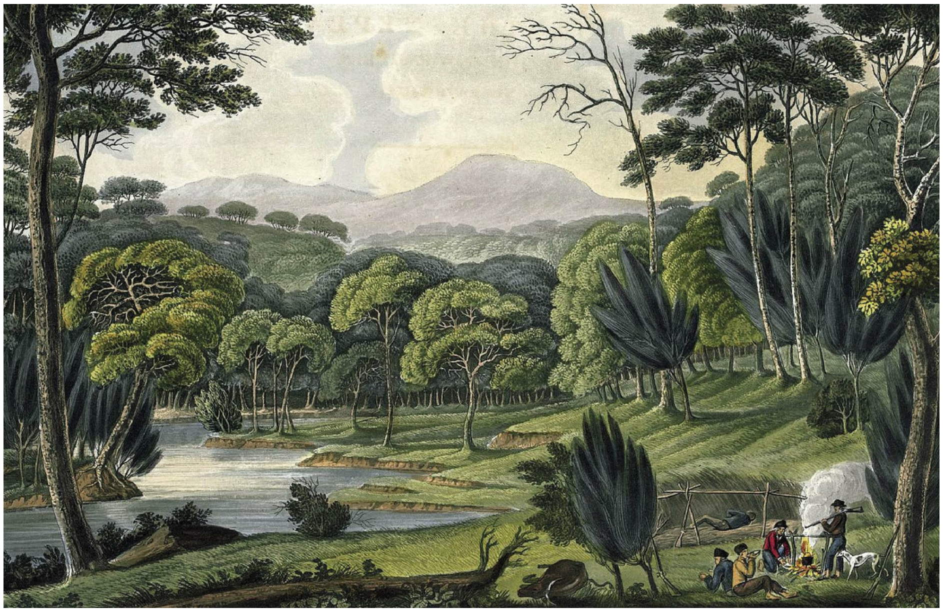
Convicts under guard in a chain gang outside Hobart, Van Diemen's Land (the future Tasmania) in 1829; the guards wear the bell-topped infantry shako authorized in 1816 and not superseded until 1844. It was to escape the harshness of the penal system, and the treatment they suffered when assigned as labourers to work the land for free settlers, that many recalcitrant prisoners took to the bush as 'bolters'. (Dixson Library, State Library of New South Wales)

Most of the convicts came from the rural or urban poor in Britain and Ireland, and while some were undoubtedly professional criminals, most had formerly been labourers, farm workers, artisans or tradesmen who had been lured into crime by simple hardship and want. Thus, although no attempt had been made to select the skills necessary to establish a new colony, the settlement did have access to a range of practical talents. Nevertheless, it was many years before the colony thrived.

Convicts and 'squatters'

Partly to address this, free settlers were encouraged to take ship for Australia from 1793 onwards. Known as 'squatters' – because they were 'squatting' in territory nominally owned by the Crown – they were leased land, and given convict labour to help develop it (with almost no checks on their treatment of these forced labourers). Within a few years of their arrival most convicts were working in some capacity or other, and only the most recalcitrant were kept in prison barracks, where discipline was often harsh. Prisoners who behaved well would be granted a 'ticket of leave', which allowed them a degree of freedom and privileges. Although the Australian colonies retained the convict system at their heart, they therefore developed an expanding economy, because – as the architects of the scheme had intended – work on behalf of the settlement afforded convicts the prospect of conditional release, and even chances for advancement. Nevertheless, many convicts remained bitterly resentful at the disproportionate severity of their punishment and the harsh conditions of penal life, and attempts to escape were common.

There was also a political aspect, since from 1798 the proportion of Irish transportees increased following the unsuccessful rebellion of that year by the 'United Irishmen' against British rule.[1] The combination of convicted felons with both political dissidents and ambitious free settlers created a distinctive society, with an ambivalent attitude towards authority.



An idyllic view of the New South Wales countryside in the 1810s. While the coastal regions were fertile, this picturesque scene does not convey the harsh conditions which made survival difficult for 'absconders' like those shown camping here. The forests of the Blue Mountains offered few resources easily accessible to European convicts, forcing many to survive by theft from isolated homesteads or by outright banditry. (Public domain/Wikimedia Commons)

The military garrison

The First Fleet had landed more than 300 British officers and officials and just over 200 Royal Marines. This handful of men were expected to protect the colony both against external threats (French ships had visited Australia, suggesting that war was not an impossibility) and resistance by indigenous groups upon whose land the settlement had trespassed, but also against internal uprisings. Individual convicts often defied authority, and there were occasional mass rebellions. In 1804 some 233 mostly Irish convicts, led by a veteran of 'the '98', escaped captivity with the intention of capturing a ship to take them back to Ireland. They were intercepted and dispersed by a small detachment of troops in the so-called 'Second Battle of Vinegar Hill' (5 March 1804), and the ringleaders were subsequently hanged.

Consequently, authority within the colony long retained a military character. As early as 1789 the New South Wales Corps (named after the colony growing around Sydney Cove) was raised in Britain for service in Australia, and sent out to replace the Marines. It remained the principal garrison until 1808, when – partly because of scandals over preferential land allotments to the officers, and an involvement in the rum trade which had seen it mutiny against Governor William Bligh (of HMS *Bounty* fame) – it was incorporated as a Line regiment (102nd Foot). Replaced by the 73rd Foot, which came out with the new Governor Lachlan Macquarie, most of its personnel returned to England in 1810.[2] Thereafter a succession of British regiments garrisoned the expanding Australian colonies, and it was not until the 1850s that a civil police force was created to take over law-enforcement duties. Originally only one regiment (battalion) was in garrison, but at its peak in the 1840s there were between four and six. Tours usually lasted between about four and seven years (although two units stayed for 12 years), with companies widely dispersed. The last infantry were not withdrawn until 1870.[3]

Proliferation of colonies

The original New South Wales colony had laid claim to all of eastern Australia, although it was not until 1813 that the Blue Mountains – which barred the way inland from Sydney – were crossed, allowing thereafter a steady expansion into the open country beyond. In 1803 the first settlers occupied the island of Van Diemen's Land off the southern coast, and a new, more severe penal colony was established there (in 1825 it became an independent colony, and was renamed Tasmania in 1856). A new colony, Victoria, was created from the southern part of New South Wales in 1851, and Queensland from northern New South Wales in 1859. In 1827 a convict-supported settlement was established to the west of New South Wales; this Swan River Colony was later renamed Western Australia, and in 1834 South Australia was also separated from New South Wales. The Northern Territory finally became a separate colony in 1863.

Notes

[1] See MAA 472, *Armies of the Irish Rebellion 1798*.

[2] Many men were then transferred to Veteran units, but the rest served in Canada during the War of 1812; renumbered the 100th Foot, the regiment was disbanded in 1818.

[3] Regimental tours were as follows: 73rd Regt (1810–14); 46th (1814–18); 48th (1817–24); 3rd (1823–27); 40th (1824–29 & 1852–60); 57th (1825–32); 39th (1827–32); 63rd (1829–33); 17th (1830–36); 4th (1832–37); 50th (1833–41 & 1866–69); 21st (1833–39); 28th (1835–42); 80th (1837–44); 51st (1838–46); 96th (1841–48); 99th (1843–56); 58th (1844–46); 11th (1845–57); 65th (1846–49); 12th (1854–61); 77th (1857–58); 14th (1867–69); 18th (1870).

THE FIRST BUSHRANGERS

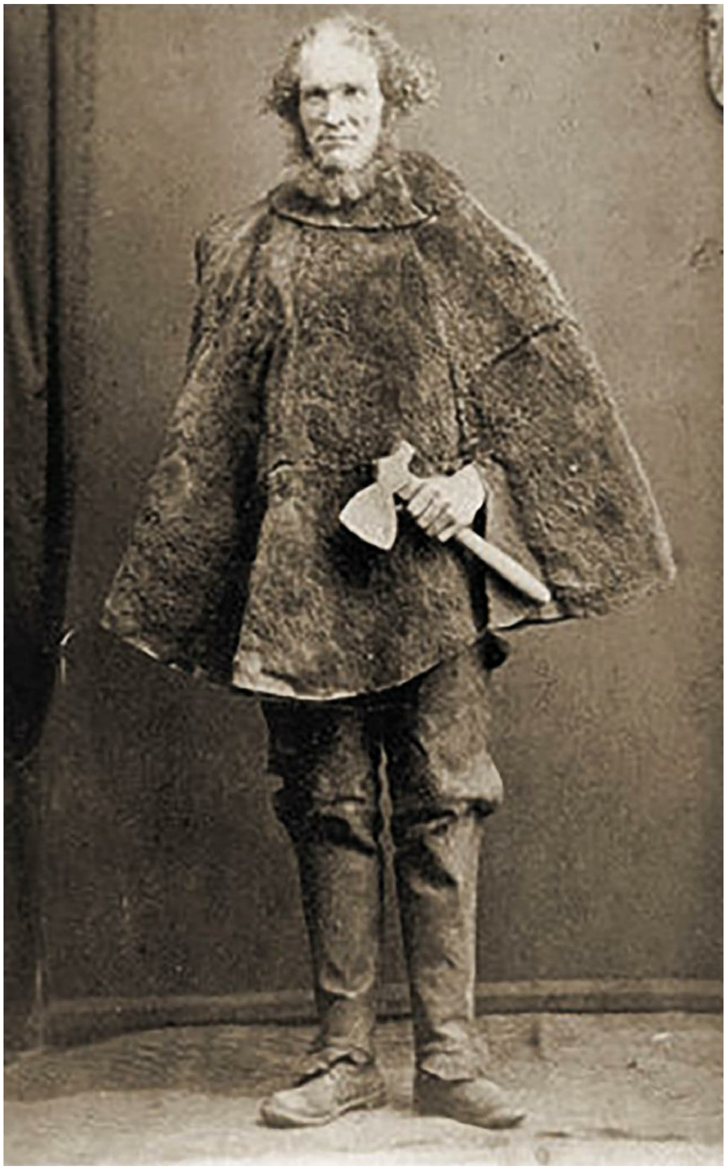
The term ‘bushrangers’ seems to have been in common use as early as the beginning of the 19th century, referring to escaped convicts who preferred to risk the considerable hazards of life in the Australian wilderness rather than endure penal authority. These men were also known as ‘absconders’ or more commonly ‘bolters’. Some were provoked by cruel treatment, at the hands of either the authorities or of squatters, and some even hoped to find a way out of Australia altogether. But life in ‘the bush’ was extremely harsh, with few food resources; most bolters found themselves unavoidably bound to the fringes of the society they had hoped to escape, with little choice but to pilfer livestock and crops from squatters if they were to survive. Others, brutalized by their experiences, readily embraced a life of banditry, preying on frontier farmers and travellers. The bushrangers’ life has consistently been romanticized, but in fact it was a desperate business, governed by constant want and danger, from those early days right through to the 1880s.

Some early ‘bolters’

John Caesar – known as ‘Black Caesar’ – was an African man who was working in Kent, England as a servant when he was convicted of theft, and transported in 1788. He tried to abscond several times, and on one occasion successfully made off with a Marine’s musket; even so, he was quickly reduced to near starvation. On one occasion he stole from an Aboriginal group and was speared, forcing him to give himself up.

In 1795 he was back working in a convict labour gang near Botany Bay when it was attacked by an Aboriginal party led by the noted warrior Pemulwuy, whom Caesar seriously injured in the resulting fight. Pemulwuy recovered to continue waging a low-key guerrilla war against the colony, during the course of which he was joined by at least two other bolters. Caesar himself absconded again not long after the fight, and joined another group of bolters living in the bush near Port Jackson. The authorities were so concerned by the threat that they posted a reward of 5 gallons of rum for his capture. Caesar was tracked down and shot in 1796; Pemulwuy too would be shot dead, in 1802.

Other absconders resorted to even more desperate measures. **Alexander Pearce** was an Irishman convicted of stealing six pairs of shoes in 1819, and transported to Van Diemen’s Land. Once there he committed further crimes, and absconded, but was caught and sent to a new penal settlement on Sarah Island in Macquarie Harbour. From there he escaped on 20 September 1822 with seven other prisoners. The men found little to sustain themselves, and after a fortnight they actually drew lots to decide which among them should be killed and eaten by the others. One man was killed, but three of the others were so appalled by the deed that they fled. Of the four that remained, still with no other food available, one was also killed and eaten, and another suffered the same fate after being bitten by a snake. That left Pearce and one other survivor – whom Pearce eventually killed.

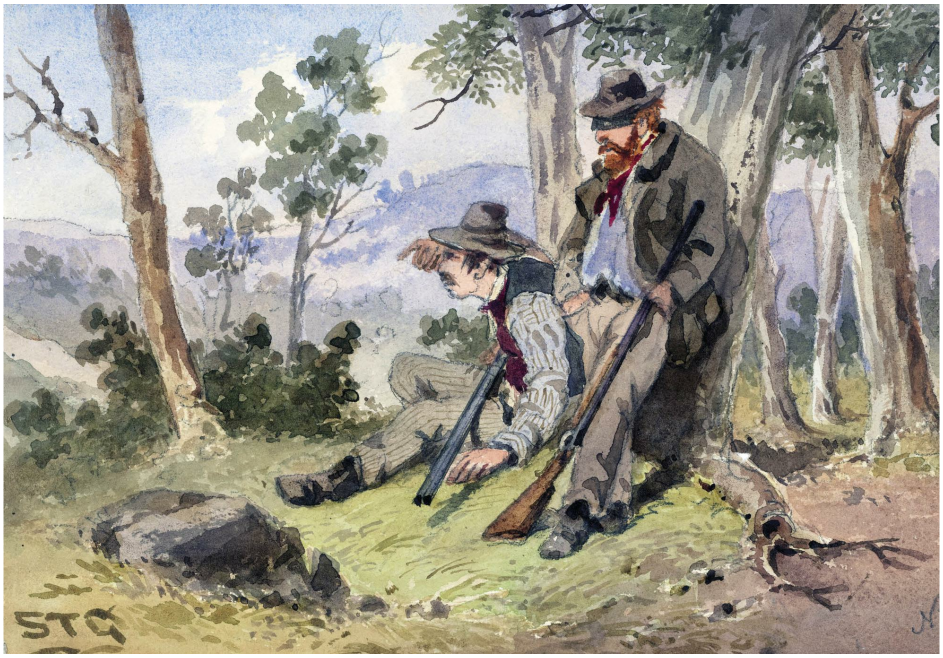


Joseph Bolitho Johns, a Western Australian convict better known as ‘Moondyne Joe’, who had been transported in 1853 for stealing food, was a particularly determined absconder. His clothing here is entirely made from kangaroo skin, a reminder of the hardship of life in the wilderness. (Public domain/Wikimedia Commons)

By this time Pearce had managed to reach the outskirts of the settled area, and he turned to stealing and killing sheep. He fell in with two other bolters, but all three were soon arrested. Pearce confessed to the murder and cannibalism of his companions, but his tale was so extraordinary that it was not believed and, rather than being hanged, he was sent back to Macquarie Harbour. Months later he escaped yet again with another prisoner, whom he also killed and ate when he decided the man was slowing him down. Pearce was soon caught, and this time his guilt was clear – he still had body parts from his victim in his pockets. This horrifying character was sentenced for murder and cannibalism, and hanged on 19 July 1824; before his death he apparently remarked that 'Men's flesh is delicious'.

For some early bushrangers, absconding represented a conscious act of defiance against the authorities. **Michael Howe** was a Yorkshireman who had served in both British merchantmen and Royal Navy warships. In 1811 he was sentenced to seven years' transportation for highway robbery, and shipped to Van Diemen's Land. Here he was assigned to a merchant as a labourer, but refused to accept his situation, declaring that 'having served the King, he would be no man's slave.' He escaped, and joined a group of absconders already living in the bush. He took advantage of an amnesty to surrender in 1814, but, irked by the constraints of convict life, he subsequently took to the bush once again. This time he joined a gang led by John Whitehead, who organized systematic raids on frontier settlers, ransacking farms and burning hayricks.

Pursuit by an armed party of settlers ended with a gunfight in which two settlers were killed and two more wounded. Troops were then quartered among vulnerable frontier settlements; nothing daunted, the Whitehead/Howe gang attacked one such outpost, firing through the windows at the unsuspecting soldiers inside. When the soldiers responded with a volley Whitehead was mortally wounded; as he lay dying he asked Howe to cut off his head to prevent anyone claiming the reward offered for his life. Howe then took over the gang and continued with his attacks, while accompanied by an Aboriginal girl known as May Cockerill. Pressure from the military and armed settlers gradually reduced Howe's gang, and in April 1817 he wrote a letter to the Lieutenant-Governor of Van Diemen's Land, William Sorrell, offering to give evidence against his associates in return for a pardon. Sorrell agreed, but the insecurities of bush life had made Howe deeply suspicious, and while under questioning at Hobart jail he feigned illness and escaped yet again. Howe returned to his old gang; when two members were reluctant to accept his authority, he killed them both as they slept. He then embarked on a fresh campaign which provoked a determined military response – and which would prove to be his last (see below, 'Line infantry').



An impression of two lurking bushrangers waiting for passing traffic on the road below. No horses are shown; most early 'bolter' gangs were forced to go on foot, which limited their range of operations and their ability to escape pursuit. Living beyond the fringes of settler society, some were helped by Aboriginal groups, but others fell victim to Aboriginal resentment at the white man's often murderous invasion of their traditional territories. Throughout the 'bushranger era' fugitives and outlaws lived very hard lives, sheltering in caves or sleeping out in the bush. They were hunted and harried, went hungry, struggled to obtain weapons and ammunition – to hunt, to protect themselves, and to intimidate others – and were constantly in danger of betrayal for reward. Almost all of them met violent ends, and very few lived to profit from their adventures. (Dixson Library, State Library of New South Wales)

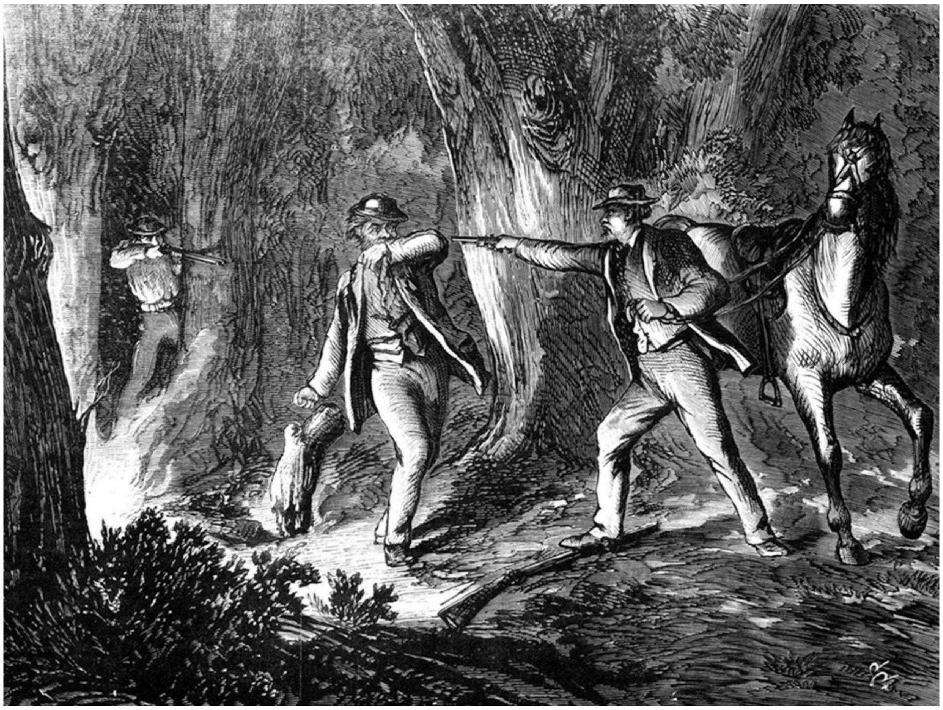
Appearance and weapons

In the early years of transportation there was no prison uniform; prisoners either wore the clothes they were wearing when convicted, or were issued 'prison slops' – coarse woollen clothes which had been manufactured as cheaply as possible – and this continued to be the norm throughout the period of transportation. In 1814, however, Governor Macquarie of New South Wales introduced a special uniform for prisoners who proved particularly troublesome, or who committed fresh crimes in Australia. This consisted of a woollen jacket and trousers coloured by alternate quarters and marked with military 'broad arrows'. Originally black and white, it became known as the 'magpie' uniform, although in fact the white parts were soon replaced with buff or yellow cloth. The trousers were buttoned down the outside leg to give easy access for clamping on leg-irons. The uniform came with a leather cap of 'tea cosy' shape which could be folded out to turn it into a wide-brimmed hat, and prison shoes.

Most bolters had little choice but to live, at least at first, in the clothes in which they escaped. Those wearing the conspicuous 'magpie' uniform were often keen to replace it as soon as possible, although some continued to wear it as a symbol of defiance. When raiding settlements replacement clothing was often as high on the absconders' list of priorities as food, weapons, ammunition and money. Those bolters who tried to distance themselves altogether from the colony had little choice but to improvise clothing as their own wore out. Kangaroos were the largest and most common animal which could be hunted for meat and hides, and absconder gangs were often conspicuous by the amount of kangaroo skin they wore. Michael Howe's clothes were said to be so heavily patched with it that it was almost impossible to see the original cloth, and he is described as wearing a cap and sometimes a cape of kangaroo skin.

One item of local manufacture that became commonplace early on and remained so until the widespread availability of other materials in the 1870s was the wide-brimmed 'cabbage-tree' hat. This was a tightly woven straw-coloured hat made from the leaf fibres of *Livistona australis*, the 'cabbage-tree palm', and it is widely recognized as the first distinctively Australian headgear. Cheap to produce and readily available, it became standard wear for men who expected to be out in all weathers; while the cheapest examples were plain, men with more to spend sported hats with decorative patterns woven into the crown and trimmed with coloured ribbons.

Weapons were obviously essential for survival. For many, like John Caesar, stealing a weapon from their military guards was an important part of their initial escape plan. During the 1810s 'ticket-of-leave' prisoners in Van Diemen's Land were trusted with firearms in order to hunt kangaroos to augment the colony's meagre food supplies, and some of these fell into the hands of absconders. The standard military firearm until the 1840s was the India Pattern 'Brown Bess' flintlock musket, and thereafter its percussion-lock replacement; these were the main weapons acquired by bolter gangs, though it needed considerable enterprise to keep them supplied with powder, ball, and later percussion caps. Settlers and travellers were regularly robbed of firearms and ammunition; these weapons varied between muskets, fowling-pieces (shotguns) and flintlock or subsequently percussion pistols. Naturally, many bolters also armed themselves with knives and hatchets.



Impression of constables – themselves perhaps ex-convict ‘ticket-of-leave’ men – capturing a bushranger at his overnight camp; he was doubtless betrayed by lighting a fire. Many of the early absconders lacked bushcraft skills, being town-born Europeans, and even countrymen had difficulty adjusting to the very different conditions in Australia. (State Library of Victoria)

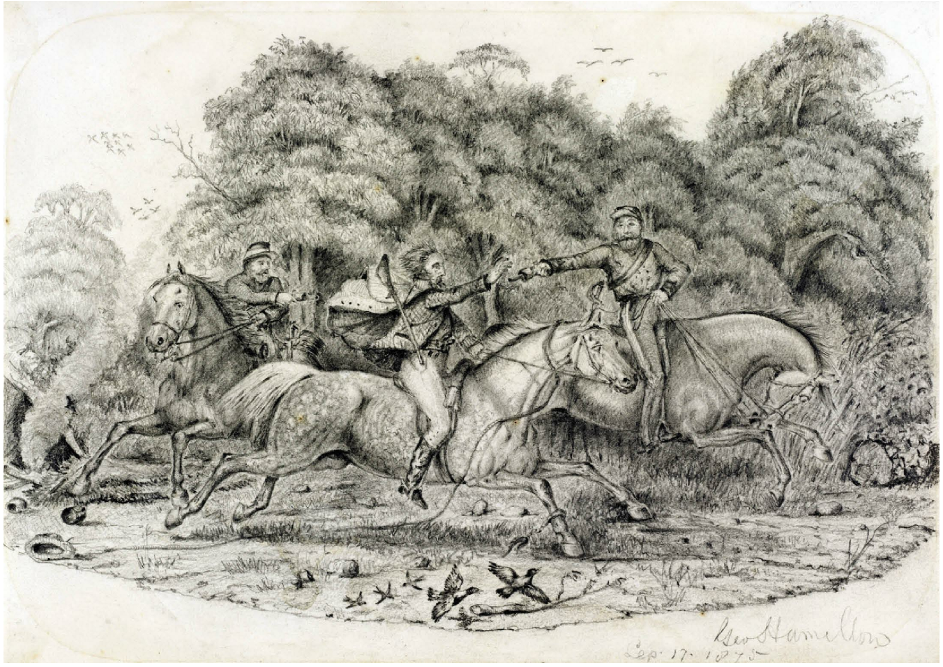
Although the First Fleet brought a number of horses to Australia – from a variety of breeds, including the Cape pony, Welsh pony and Arabian horse – mounts remained in short supply in the early days of the colony. After 1813, once settlement had expanded across the Blue Mountains and into country more suitable for raising livestock, the various imported horse breeds were combined to produce a sturdy and distinctive Australian ‘stock horse’. The greater availability of horses bred to withstand Australian conditions meant that from the 1820s bushrangers were increasingly mounted, and from the 1830s possession of a good horse became a staple requirement of the trade.

LAW ENFORCEMENT

The New South Wales Corps

Initially 300 strong and first raised in London, Chatham and Portsmouth in 1789, the Corps was sent to Australia by increments; though rarely numbering more than 500, it would garrison the colony for the next 20 years. It soon became woven into the fabric of colonial life, as the officers exerted considerable influence over colonial policy and the economy. This brought them into conflict with successive governors, and ultimately to the 'Rum Rebellion' against Governor Bligh in 1808 and their subsequent replacement with Line infantry battalions from Britain.

Nevertheless, the New South Wales Corps had profoundly influenced the development of the early colony, and had spread a military capability throughout the wider population. To augment its initial strength, the Corps had recruited sailors, free settlers and selected convicts, and when the regiment – redesignated the 102nd Foot – was withdrawn from Australia a proportion of its officers and other ranks preferred to take their discharges locally. When attempts were made to raise a citizen militia around the time of the 1804 convict revolt many of those who responded were former members of the Corps, and it was trained by the Corps' NCOs. Although the regiment's reputation suffered due to the various scandals surrounding its officers' political and financial activities, there is little to suggest that the character of its rankers was any worse than in any other contemporary British unit. During their tenure as garrison the Corps were involved in skirmishes with Aboriginals, in suppressing convict unrest, and in the pursuit of bushrangers. They were, throughout, uniformed and equipped as a Line infantry battalion of the British Army, with scarlet coats and yellow facings, the officers wearing cocked hats and other ranks the 1800 or 1806 'stovepipe' shakos.



An unusual drawing depicting two uniformed policemen in a horseback gunfight with a bushranger. This was not typical of most encounters – both sides usually shot it out on foot. Most of the captures and killings occurred when bushrangers were tracked to their camps, or were surprised at homesteads which they were robbing or where they were seeking shelter. (State Library of New South Wales)

Line infantry

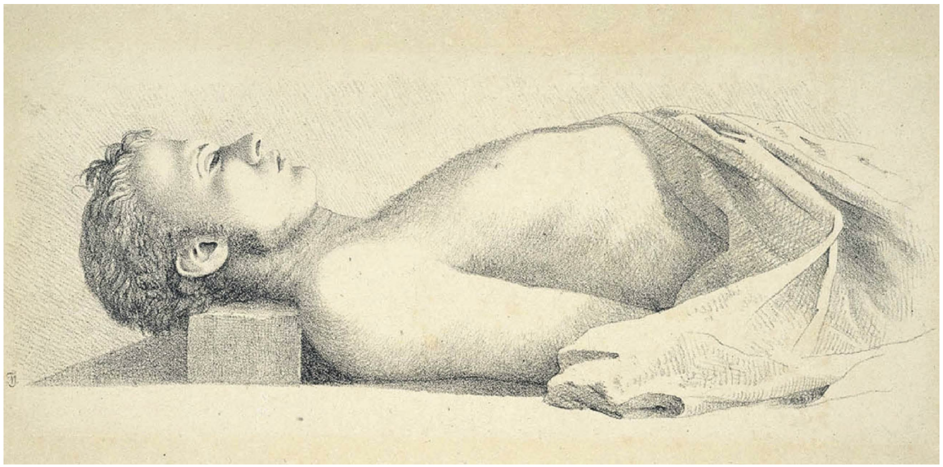
When the New South Wales Corps marched out from Sydney to leave Australia on New Year's Day 1810 they paraded past the 73rd Regiment of Foot (formerly 2nd Bn, Royal Highland Regt), who had just arrived to replace them. This began the practice by which Australia was added to the regular garrison outposts around the British Empire. Initially only one battalion served there at a time, but the expansion of colonial territory, the continuous friction with the indigenous people, and the increasing menace of bushrangers meant that by 1830 four battalions were stationed in Australia, and five by the mid-1840s.

For the most part British troops operating in Australia were allowed few concessions to the terrain and heat. In 1814 men from the 46th (South Devonshire) and 48th (Northamptonshire) Regts were employed in anti-bushranger patrols through the bush in Van Diemen's Land. Small groups of soldiers, guided by constables appointed from among 'ticket-of-leave' men, were sent out to sweep through the wilderness for up to a month at a time, still wearing the uniform designed for service in European theatres: shakos, red coatees, white trousers in the summer months (between October and May in the southern hemisphere) and grey in the winter. Clothes became dirty and patched; trousers often had to be replaced with civilian garments procured along the way, and knapsacks were replaced by rolling the contents into a blanket worn *en banderole*. Despite the difficulties, however, these operations produced results.

In February 1817 a party of the 46th led by Ensign Mahon interrupted three bushrangers who were attempting to ambush them. The bolters fled, but Mahon's soldiers gave chase and killed them all; Mahon then ordered the heads to be cut off and brought back as proof. In June 1817 a Cpl Justin McCarthy and seven men of the 46th caught up with a similar number of bushrangers who were well armed with muskets and pistols, and the ensuing firefight lasted 90 minutes. The bushrangers' leader was killed and two of his men mortally wounded, while the rest of the gang scattered. The dead man turned out to be Peter Geary, a deserter from the 73rd Regt who had recently been acting as Michael Howe's lieutenant.

Howe's band had been reduced to perhaps a dozen men and the net was closing in, but the Yorkshire ex-sailor remained defiant. In October 1817, betrayed by one of his men, he was lured to a store where he was overpowered and tied up. He managed to get free, however, killing the man who betrayed him and mortally wounding the storekeeper. Despite further patrols sent to find him he remained at large for another year until, on 21 October 1818, he was lured to a remote hut where a private of the 48th Regt, William Pugh, and a convict trustie stockman, Thomas Worrall, were lying in wait. Howe spotted them, and a gunfight broke out – Worrall fired a shot and Howe staggered and ran into the bush, only to be intercepted by William Pugh. Howe's end was as brutal as his life; Pugh knocked him down with his musket and, as Howe struggled to pull a knife, clubbed him to death.

This incident is a reminder that in the early operations against bushrangers the authorities made extensive use of former convicts or ticket-of-leave men. With so few free settlers available, almost all non-military manpower had passed through the convict system at some point. While there was an obvious danger of divided loyalties, many ex-convicts were keen to redeem themselves by serving as constables, and often brought a knowledge of the terrain and conditions which the military lacked. Although they were armed, such men did not wear uniform.



The only type of portrait which most bushrangers before the mid-19th century could expect: a sketch made after death. This shows ‘Bold Jack’ Donohoe, the original ‘Wild Colonial Boy’, who was shot dead by Pte Muckleston of the Mounted Police on 1 September 1830. Donohoe was one of the first bushrangers to cultivate a flamboyant public image – see reconstruction as **Plate A3**. (State Library of New South Wales/Wikimedia Commons/CC-BY-SA 3.0)

The Buffs’ mounted patrol

No regular cavalry units were deployed to Australia, and the lack of mounted patrols, both against bushrangers and Aboriginal groups on the expanding frontier, was keenly felt. This problem increased during the 1820s, when bushrangers were increasingly acquiring horses themselves. In 1825 LtCol William Stewart of the 3rd Regiment (the Buffs) mounted a detachment of 25 men from his unit on heavy draft horses, and deployed them in operations in the Hunter Valley, where the settlers were suffering frequent bushranger raids. As an example of the concept of ‘mounted infantry’ – mounting infantrymen on horses to improve their mobility, but dismounting them to fight on foot – this was ahead of its time, and would not be repeated by the British military until the Cape Frontier Wars in southern Africa a decade later.

While it was no more than a temporary expedient, the Buffs’ patrol successfully intercepted a number of bushranger bands. In October 1825 they cornered a gang of five who were well armed and mounted on stolen horses, killing one in the ensuing shoot-out and rounding up the remainder over the next few days. This encouraged LtCol Stewart to develop a permanent body of Mounted Police.

The Mounted Police

Recruited from among former soldiers, this would become the spearhead of operations against the bushrangers for over 20 years. Originally only a dozen strong, by 1830 it had increased to 100 men. They were issued an impressive ‘French-grey’ service uniform based upon that of the East India Company’s light cavalry (troopships en route from Britain to Australia sailed via India, and the uniforms were probably procured there), but wore more practical dress when in the field. Although information is scarce, in the 1820s they seem to have worn a blue stable jacket with white facings, blue trousers with a white stripe, and a blue forage cap with a white band. By the 1830s, however, their field dress consisted of a ‘Rifle-green’ stable jacket, with green trousers in winter and white in summer. With both uniforms a local ‘cabbage-tree’ hat was often worn in preference to the forage cap. Weapons were a light cavalry-pattern Paget carbine and sword, and flintlock pistols carried in saddle-holsters.

The Mounted Police soon earned official approval for their skill at rounding up bolters, particularly in the open country beyond the Blue Mountains, which was well suited to mounted patrols. They also regularly patrolled trails through the bush closer to Sydney and intercepted absconders trying to make a getaway, and supported military operations against Aboriginal groups. They became the subject of some criticism, however: operating in remote areas, mixing with convicts and ex-convicts, their discipline was sometimes lax, and they were resented for sometimes resorting to harsh methods. On the frontier they became known for their ruthless brutality against the Aborigines.

While the wearing of uniforms in the field often had a positive effect – as a visible demonstration of the presence of legal authority – they were sometimes problematic, particularly on search operations. When policemen were tracking bushranger bands a conspicuous uniform could be spotted among the undergrowth, or from long distances when on the plains. As a result, the Mounted Police sometimes used plain clothes, and this established a precedent which would endure throughout the bushranger era. While policemen on everyday duties still wore uniform, the field detachments tasked with tracking bushranger bands often wore civilian dress. Nevertheless, they could still be identified by the bushrangers' sympathetic informants by their unusually heavy armament.

‘GENTLEMEN BUSHRANGERS’, 1820s–1840s

Throughout the 1820s the nature of bushranging began to change. The expansion of colonial boundaries, the developing success of stock farms, and the military pressure on bolter gangs reduced the numbers of simple absconders roaming the countryside, but instead saw the emergence of individuals and gangs who exploited the changing conditions. Some of these saw themselves as colonial successors to the British ‘highwayman’ tradition; like those forebears, they often enjoyed their notoriety, and adopted elegant manners and styles of dress which mocked the affectations of the emerging class of wealthy Australian landowners.

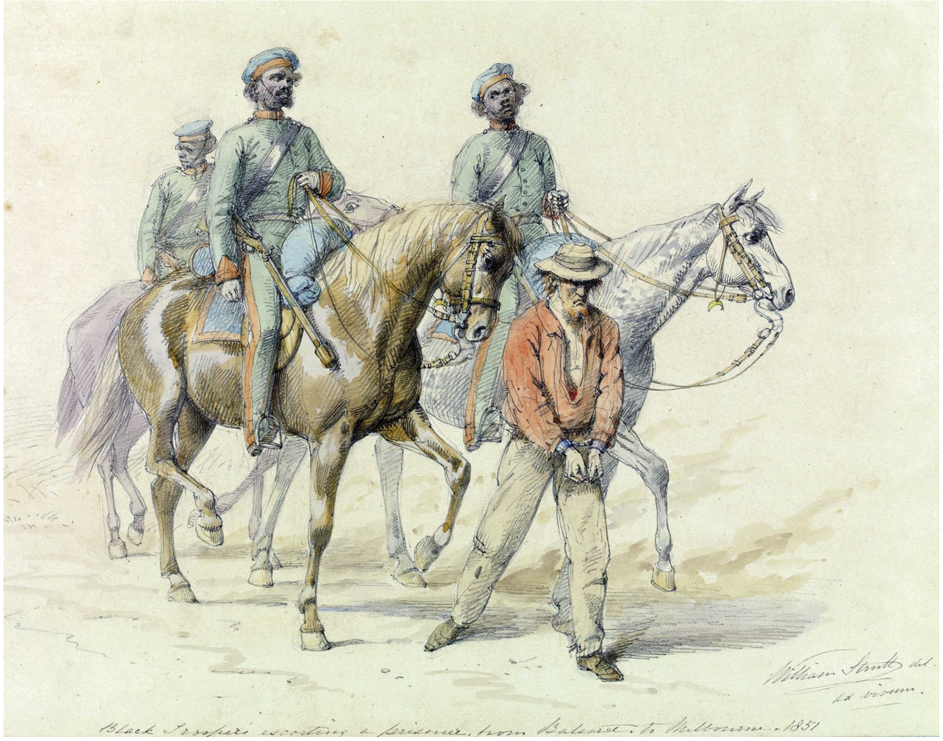
Matthew Brady

One of the first of these ‘gentlemen bushrangers’ was Matthew Brady. Born Matthew Bready in Manchester, England in 1799, he may have served as a soldier; other sources suggest that he learned the handling of horses while working as a groom. In 1820 he was convicted in Salford for stealing a basket with butter, bacon, sugar and rice, and was sentenced to seven years’ transportation. From the first, he rebelled against convict life; during his time in Sydney he received a total of 350 lashes, and was transferred to Van Diemen’s Land in 1823. In June 1824 Brady was one of a group of 15 convicts who escaped from Sarah Island by stealing a whaleboat, and then took to the bush. For two years this gang operated as bushrangers, earning considerable notoriety for their daring. When robbing outlying farms Brady nevertheless treated his victims with courtesy; he declared that he would never insult a woman, nor shed blood unless in self-defence, but he seemed to enjoy goading the authorities.

His gang ambushed and disarmed a party of soldiers sent to guard the village of Sorrell, then went from house to house looting everything of value. When, in April 1825, Lieutenant-Governor Arthur offered a reward for the capture of the gang, Brady responded by nailing his own counter-proclamation to the door of an inn, offering 20 gallons of rum to anyone who could deliver Arthur to *him*. At the beginning of March 1826 Brady notified the garrison commander at the town of Launceston, Col Balfour of the 40th (2nd Somersetshire) Regt, that he intended to raid the homestead of a wealthy settler named Richard Dry on the outskirts of town, and then raid Launceston jail to free the prisoners. Balfour did not take this bravado seriously, but on the night of 4 March the Brady gang arrived at Dry’s home. A servant managed to escape and raise the alarm, and a local magistrate hurried to the farm with armed constables. A gunfight broke out, and the bushrangers retired into cover; firing was still going on when Balfour arrived with a detachment of his men. One of Balfour's party was wounded and died a week later, while Balfour himself lost his forage cap – which Brady took as a trophy. The bushrangers eventually withdrew under the military pressure, abandoning their plan to raid the jail.

The authorities reacted by increasing the rewards offered, by mounting more patrols, and by trying to plant infiltrators in the gang. Not long after the shoot-out at the Dry homestead Brady encountered an absconder in leg-irons making his way through the bush; Brady had his irons struck off, and the man, named Cowan, joined the gang. He had in fact been planted as an informer, promised his freedom in return. On 28 March 1826 a Lt Williams of the 57th (West Middlesex) Regiment, with 14 of his soldiers and four armed convict trusties, surprised Brady's gang in the bush south of Launceston. In the ensuing gunfight Brady was badly wounded in the leg and his men scattered, two later being captured by local farmers. On 1 April a campfire was spotted, and a settler who went out to investigate found Matthew Brady limping through the bush. Brady was tried on 27 April 1826; his notoriety attracted a large crowd, many of them women, some of whom sent flowers to his cell. He was hanged in Hobart jail on 4 May 1826, alongside four other bushrangers.

(One of these – to Brady's disgust – was Thomas Jeffries, who represented the other end of the bushranging spectrum, which should not be forgotten. Whereas Brady made a point of courtesy, Jeffries was a violent rapist and child-murderer who had shot several of his victims during robberies. Like Alexander Pearce, Jeffries too had once killed and eaten a companion when lost in the bush without food.)


William Strutt del.
ad vivum.
Black Troopers escorting a prisoner, from Ballarat to Melbourne. 1851

Three green-uniformed Aboriginal troopers of the New South Wales Native Police (see **Plate E1**) escort a prisoner on the goldfields in 1851. He is more likely to be a 'digger' found without a prospector's license than a captured bushranger. Note that he wears a 'cabbage-tree' hat and a red 'Crimea' shirt. (William Strutt; State Library of Victoria)

'Bold Jack' Donohoe

John Donohoe was born in Dublin, Ireland in about 1806. An orphan who was driven to petty theft, he may later have been involved in political agitation; in 1823 he was sentenced for 'intent to commit a felony' and transported to New South Wales. He absconded with two other convicts, and all three held up a number of bullock-wagons in December 1827. They were soon caught and sentenced to death, but while his companions were hanged Donohoe managed to escape. He then formed a new gang who became known as 'The Strippers', ranging widely across the Bathurst district 'stripping' wealthy settlers of their money, clothing, guns and food. 'Bold Jack' became the most notorious bushranger in New South Wales during the 1820s; he was daring, could be charming, and revelled in defying authority. Many of the servants of wealthier squatters were assigned from among the convict population; these developed some sympathy with Donohoe's gang, passing information to assist their robberies and reporting the movements of troops and constables.

Donohoe himself dressed to suit his devil-may-care image. By robbing wealthy estates ('stations') the gang were able to obtain clothing of the type then becoming fashionable in the colony, including cut-away frock coats, waistcoats, ruffled shirts, cravats and Wellington boots. A stockman who met Donohoe in the bush one day described him as wearing a velveteen coat and vest, a 'cabbage-tree' hat, moleskin trousers, and a blue nankeen shirt with a white heart motif embroidered on the breast. Another description confirms his predilection for frock coats, and noted that he was wearing a top hat. Victims bore testimony to the fact that the gang were heavily armed with muskets and with pistols carried thrust into their belts.

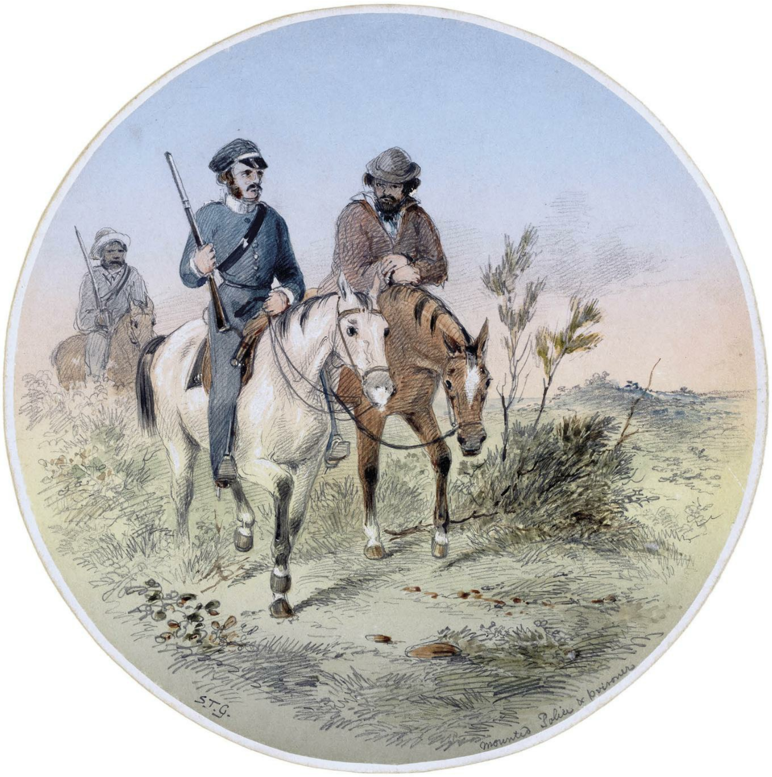
Donohoe lived up to his self-created image to the last. On 1 September 1830 a patrol consisting of three ticket-of-leave constables and six of the Mounted Police spotted three men leading a packhorse, and gave chase. When the bushrangers fled into a creek the policemen separated, pursuing them on either bank, and one party managed to confront them at about a hundred yards' range. The bushrangers dismounted, and Donohoe reportedly threw his hat in the air, calling out, 'Come on, you cowardly rascals! – We're ready, if there's a dozen of you!' During an exchange of shots from behind trees Pte John Muckleston of the Mounted Police dropped one of the bushrangers; the police pursued the other two, but were forced to give up when night fell. When they returned they found the wounded man to be Donohoe himself; Muckleston had double-loaded his carbine with a carbine ball and pistol ball, and one had hit Donohoe in the forehead and the other in the throat. 'Bold Jack' died shortly afterwards.

There was such widespread relief among the property-owning classes that clay pipes bearing Donohoe's portrait were produced to celebrate his death, complete with a hole in the forehead. However, among the convict population he had become something of a hero for his spirited defiance of the authorities, and he inspired a famous ballad, *The Wild Colonial Boy*, which at one point was considered so subversive that it was banned. The line *'I'll fight but not surrender!'* epitomised the determination not only of Donohoe but of subsequent bushrangers never to submit to the authorities and be taken alive.

'Teddy' Davis

Edward Davis was born in Chatham, Kent in 1816, but it was under the name George Wilkinson that he was prosecuted in April 1832 for attempting to steal a till and coins to the value of seven shillings, and sentenced to seven years' transportation. Arriving in Sydney in 1834, over the next four years he made four unsuccessful attempts to bolt. He finally escaped in July 1838 and, with two other absconders, began robbing travellers and homesteads in the area around the Hunter Valley. Davis, who seems to have been naturally charismatic, rose to become the leader of a growing gang. Being Jewish, he was remembered in folklore as 'Teddy the Jewboy', although it is not certain that this nickname was used during his lifetime. Small and slight, with long dark hair and beard, Davis was an excellent horseman who deliberately cultivated a dashing air. He liked to wear smart and stylish clothes; his gang adopted pink ribbons as their badge, wearing them around their 'cabbage-tree' hats or tied to clothing and bridles. Davis himself had tattoos on his arms, and wore stolen rings on each of his fingers. The gang behaved courteously towards women, and Davis himself insisted that they should not shed blood, in the belief that to do so would provoke divine retribution. The gang deliberately cultivated support among the convict population; more than once, when told by the assigned servants of a station they raided that the owner was particularly harsh, they had the man flogged. On other occasions they gave some of their loot away to mistreated workers.

Throughout 1840 the gang swept down from their hideout in the bush to raid farms and rob travellers. All were skilled riders on excellent stolen horses; they moved rapidly, often striking several times in the same area before melting away, and on at least one occasion they set up a roadblock and calmly robbed everyone who came past. In evading patrols the Davis gang benefited from the goodwill they had earned among the assigned workers and convicts in the area, but by the end of the year their luck was turning. The gang raided a village called St Aubin on 21 December 1840, splitting into two parties to hold up the hotel and store. The raid went off smoothly until a shop assistant ran out into the street and fired at the gang as they rode away; one of the bushrangers, John Shea, panicked and shot the man dead. The gang then made off to their camp at a place called Doughboy Hollow, where a posse of constables and ticket-of-leave men led by Capt Edward Day caught up with them.



The first civilian police force was organized on the goldfields from 1853 to take over from the Native Police. There is some variation between period coloured images of these Gold Fields Police (see **Plate E3**). Since they were equipped by regional magistrates their dark blue uniforms may have differed between Victoria and New South Wales, or even between districts; most are shown as here, with white facings, but some are depicted with red. The peaked forage cap is often shown with the crown pushed back. (Dixson Library, State Library of New South Wales)

A gunfight broke out among the trees and Day singled out Davis, who was conspicuous by his dress. Day fired; Davis rested his weapon on the branch of a tree to steady his aim, fired back, but missed; Day fired a second time, and hit Davis in the shoulder. Davis and Shea were captured together with three other gang members, and a fourth was taken the following day. Early in 1841 Shea was tried for the murder of the store assistant, and the others for aiding and abetting him. There was considerable public sympathy for the accused, but on 16 March 1841 Davis and his gang were executed at the old Sydney jail; at the last, Davis was attended by a rabbi from the Sydney synagogue.

‘Jacky Jacky’ Westwood

William Westwood, born in Essex, England, was convicted of highway robbery and later again for stealing a coat, and sentenced to transportation. He arrived in New South Wales in 1837 and was assigned as a farm labourer, but he escaped after being mistreated. Over the next few years he was caught and re-absconded several times, and after unsuccessfully organizing a mass break-out of fellow prisoners he was sent to the harsh penal colony of Van Diemen's Land. He escaped from Port Arthur in 1843 by swimming across a channel, though two companions who were with him were taken by sharks. Westwood lived free in the bush, stealing clothes, food, money and ammunition; known as 'Jacky Jacky', he too affected a gentlemanly air, dressing in smart clothes, behaving courteously towards women, and avoiding violence.

Caught once more, Westwood was sent to Norfolk Island. There he earned the trust of the authorities until a change in the prison regime reduced prisoner privileges and provoked a crisis. 'Jacky Jacky' suddenly called upon his fellow prisoners to rebel; about 1,600 men joined him, attacking and killing prison staff. They stormed the main gate and marched on Government House, only to be confronted by soldiers hurriedly deployed to meet them. Armed with only cudgels and prison tools the convicts stood no chance, and the rebellion collapsed; Westwood and 11 other ringleaders were hanged on 13 October 1846.

Martin Cash

Sitting quietly in his cell while this riot was taking place was perhaps the last of the Van Diemen's Land bushrangers, Martin Cash. This Irishman's story is interesting not merely for his adventures, but because in later life he deliberately created a myth that he was 'the last of the gentlemen bushrangers'.

Cash was born in County Wexford in 1808; by his own account he was sentenced to transportation in 1827 for shooting a love rival in the buttocks, although the evidence suggests his crime was actually housebreaking. In New South Wales he was assigned as a farm worker, and seems to have accepted his new life, serving out his sentence until, by his own account, he was 'accidentally' implicated in cattle-rustling. He moved to Van Diemen's Land in 1837, taking with him the wife of a neighbouring squatter. There he was convicted of stealing eggs and sent back to prison, only to make three unsuccessful escape attempts.

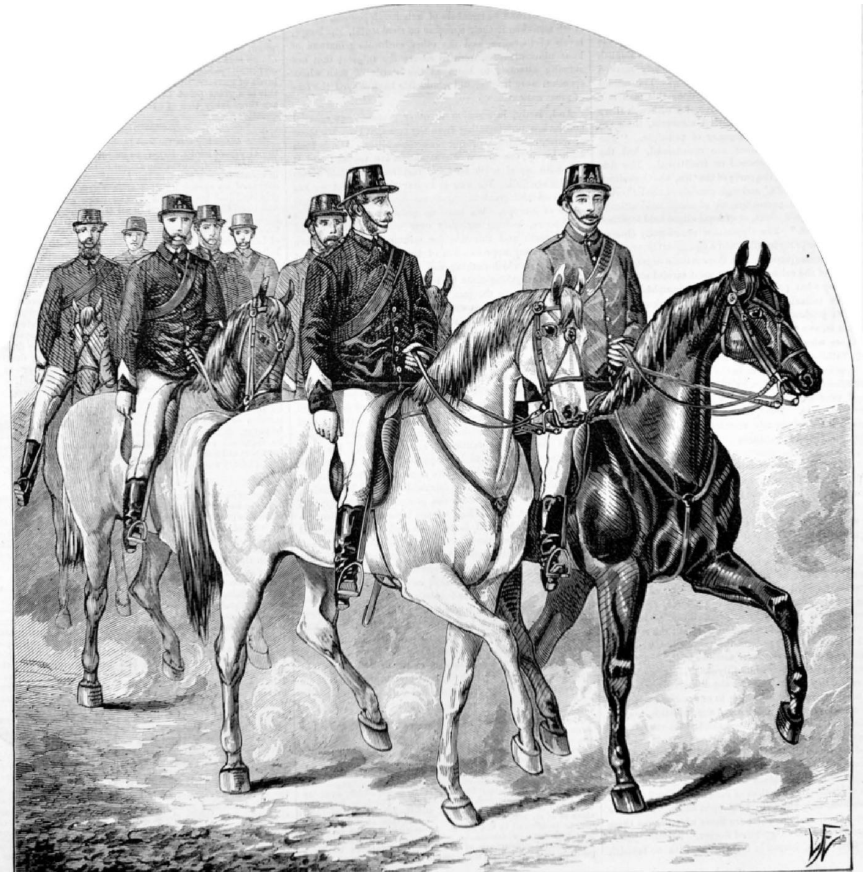
At the end of 1842 Cash and two fellow prisoners managed to escape from Port Arthur by swimming across the strait; they arrived naked on the beach, and promptly robbed a labour-gang's hut of clothing. They then embarked on a two-year career of bushranging, robbing settlements, inns and road traffic. Cash followed the tradition of behaving courteously to his victims and seldom offering violence, although, when he heard that his lover had fled to Hobart with another man, he set off in pursuit swearing to kill them both. In Hobart he was recognized and fled, and during a scuffle he shot a constable dead.

Captured, he was sentenced to death, but the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment on Norfolk Island. Here he lived quietly and became a trustie prisoner, refusing to join the ‘Jacky Jacky’ uprising. He was eventually given his ticket-of-leave and appointed as a constable. He married, raised a son, and abandoned his criminal past, although it continued to dog him. In the 1860s he visited New Zealand, where he ran a brothel until his identity was discovered and he was run out of town by the authorities. Having failed to build a new life for himself he returned to Tasmania and his family. In his later years he dictated his autobiography, in which he presented himself as a wronged and dashing highwayman. He lived until 1877, one of the few bushrangers to die of old age.

LAW ENFORCEMENT ON THE GOLDFIELDS, 1850s–1870s

Traces of gold had been found in Australia since the early days of the settlement, but the authorities, fearful of the effect on discipline and the economy, had suppressed the news. With the worldwide impact of the Californian Gold Rush of 1849, however, there was a renewed interest in prospecting in Australia, and in February 1851 – just months before Victoria was established as a separate colony – a veteran of the American gold rush, Edward Hargreaves, found gold in a creek-bed near Bathurst, New South Wales. Over the following months more finds were made across New South Wales and particularly in the new colony of Victoria, and, as word spread around the world, a gold rush began which would transform the nature of Australian colonial society.

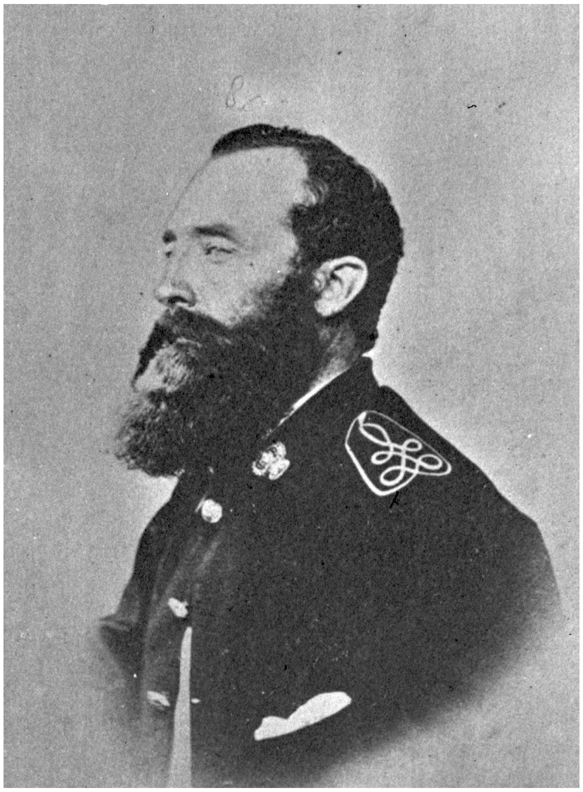
Between 1852 and 1860 some 290,000 people migrated to Victoria from Britain, 15,000 from Europe, 18,000 from America and 12,000 from China; between 1851 and 1873, the population of Australia rose from 430,000 to 1.7 million. Many of the first migrants were young, adventurous men looking to make their fortunes. The rise of the gold camps, where the ‘diggers’ lived in tents or rough bark shanties, provided opportunities for craftsmen, tradesmen, publicans and professional men (as well as more dubious types) to thrive on the diggers’ disposable income. Within a few years Australian colonial society began to shift away from its convict roots – although transportation continued into the 1860s – and to develop a new unique character of its own.



Engraving celebrating the newly constituted Victoria Mounted Police of the 1860s. Both the New South Wales and Victoria Mounted Police wore blue 'sack coats' with white trousers, the latter force with a double-peaked shako (see **Plate F2**). Note the sergeant with two rank chevrons above his right cuff. (State Library of Victoria)

This new society was not without its tensions. The egalitarian nature of the new world chafed against the traditions of the old; old resentments between an English-based authority and the Irish diaspora lingered; and those still within the convict system were excluded from the new opportunities enjoyed by free diggers and settlers. Moreover, the influx of diggers swamped the fragile law-enforcement infrastructure, and in the first years of the gold rush the diggings were lawless places. Crime varied from drunken brawls, through the petty theft of diggers' equipment, to the hijacking of gold finds. Most criminals were unsuccessful diggers themselves, or small-time thieves who preyed on them, but the boom fuelled by gold also gave rise to some of the most famous of all the bushrangers.

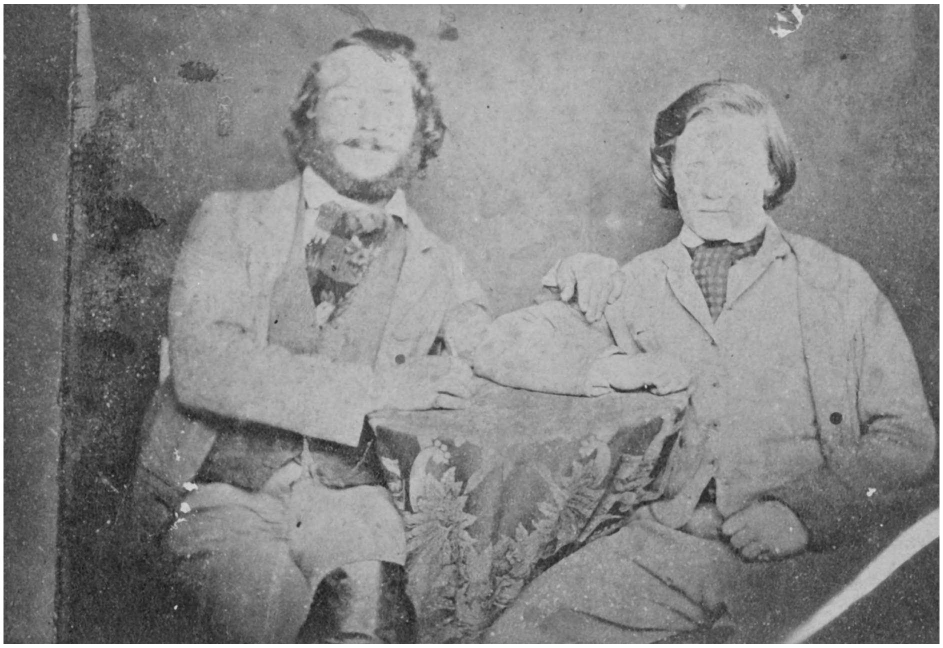
As early as May 1851 the Governor of New South Wales issued a proclamation that all minerals discovered there belonged to the Crown, and this was soon followed by a similar proclamation in Victoria. Miners were therefore required to buy a license which entitled them to prospect for gold; this financial burden was greatly resented, since it was payable whether or not they had found gold, and it eventually led to the Eureka Stockade rebellion of 1854.[4] It was argued, however, that the revenue from the licenses helped to fund new infrastructure, including a standing police force. All miners who found gold were required to hand it to government commissioners who were established in the goldfields; these weighed and assessed the gold, and paid for it in cash. The gold and sometimes the cash were then transported under guard to secure banks in the colony's urban centres.



Superintendent Sir Frederick Pottinger of the New South Wales Mounted Police, who was responsible for the intense and ultimately controversial operations that destroyed the Hall gang in 1865. He is portrayed wearing his dark blue full-dress jacket buttoned at the top only, with silver 'VR' (for *Victoria Regina*) buttons, silver-laced shoulder straps, and crown rank-badge, and has a white handkerchief tucked into his breast pocket. (State Library of New South Wales)

This naturally presented security challenges, and there were several attempts to raise bodies of armed men for escort duty. After the 40th Regt returned to Australia in 1852, 125 men who could ride were selected for gold-escort duty and, armed with carbines, they provided outriders to the gold convoys despatched from the Victoria goldfields to Melbourne. Their presence prevented organized attacks, although a growing number of bushrangers operating on the roads around the various goldfields made travel hazardous.

On the goldfields themselves the **Mounted Police** preserved order as best they could, but their numbers were inadequate. Initially the only other organized unit available was the **New South Wales Native Police**. There had been various attempts to raise a security force from among the Aboriginal population, particularly on the expanding frontier where settlers frequently clashed with indigenous groups, and when pursuing bushrangers the authorities had routinely employed Aboriginal trackers for their skill in bushcraft. The NSW Native Police had finally been established in 1842; initially about 60 strong and led by white officers, they were dressed in a smart dark green uniform and armed with carbines and swords. By 1852 their establishment had been expanded, and although their role remained primarily one of frontier protection (and despite the reluctance of their officers), some were deployed to the goldfields. Their main task was pursuing diggers who had dodged the license system, although they also provided some security against bushrangers.



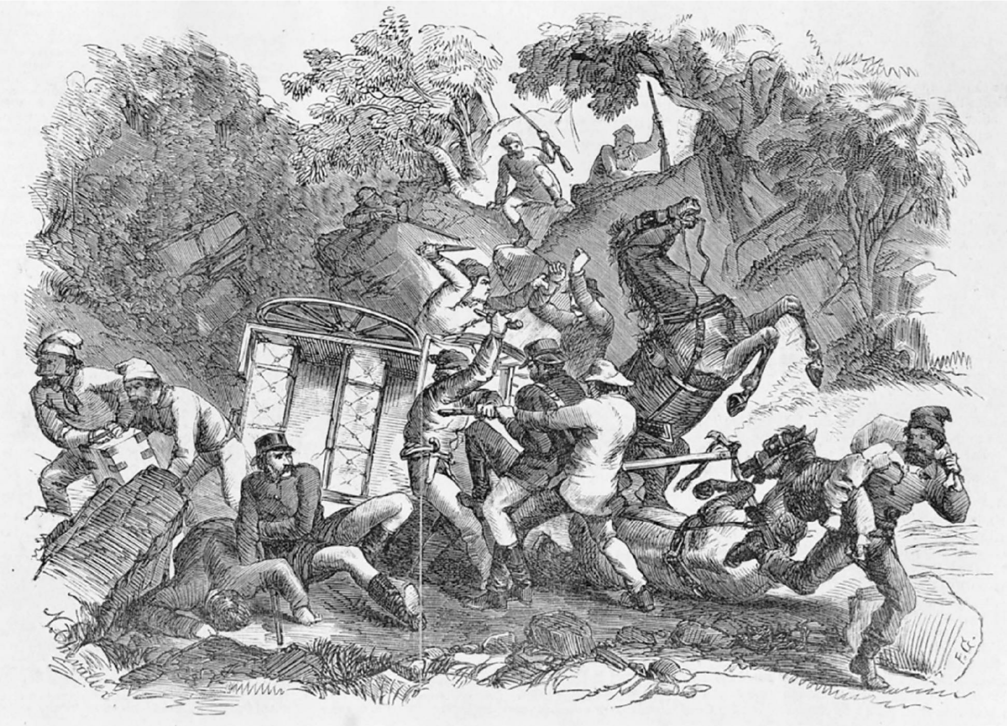
A faded but historic photograph of Frank Gardiner (left), the most ambitious and successful of the goldfields bushrangers. Gardiner (see **Plate C3**) followed the habit of fashionable dress originated by some of his predecessors in the 1820s–1830s, imitating the pretensions of the settler elite – here he wears an extravagant cravat, dark waistcoat, and high boots covering the knee. Many believe that the man sitting beside him is ‘Happy Jack’ Gilbert. (Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales)

The deployment of the Native Police was never more than a temporary expedient, however, and in 1853 magistrates in the goldfields were authorized to recruit uniformed constables to maintain order. This was a significant step towards a civilian police force becoming the main law-enforcement agency throughout colonial Australia, although the **Gold Fields Police** did not enjoy a good reputation. While many were conscientious, the rankers were recruited largely from ex-convicts and ex-soldiers, and were widely resented for their heavy-handed treatment of the diggers. Although they were expected to protect diggers and gold shipments alike from bushrangers, their primary duty remained the enforcement of the license laws. They wore dark blue uniforms with a forage cap – a long plain coat for foot duties and a short stable jacket when mounted – and were armed with carbines and swords.

Although attempts had been made as early as 1850 to centralize police forces within the colonies, their essentially local character persisted until 1862, when the Police Regulation Act placed all existing police units within New South Wales under the control of an Inspector General. From this point the police forces in both New South Wales and Victoria were properly organized, uniformed and equipped.

The uniform of the **New South Wales Mounted Police** at this date consisted of a loose dark blue jacket with white metal buttons, tight white trousers, black boots, and a dark blue forage cap resembling that worn by the contemporary US Army. White rank chevrons were worn point-up on the right forearm only. Officers were authorized a braided blue patrol jacket but seldom seem to have worn it in the field, preferring civilian dress; senior officers wore a dark blue jacket with silver lace. Weapons were a percussion carbine, either Enfield or Calisher & Terry, and a sword, though the latter was seldom carried in the field. Colt Navy-pattern revolvers were issued for special duties; although some sketches show them holstered on a black waist belt, they mostly seem to have been carried in saddle-holsters.

The uniform of the **Victoria Mounted Police** broadly followed that issued in New South Wales, but was distinguished by a stiff shako with linked peaks front and rear, bearing a number on the front; a white cover was issued for the summer months. This shako was replaced during the 1870s by a tall dark blue helmet similar to that of British police.



In this fanciful impression of the Gardiner gang's spectacular robbery of the gold coach at Eugowra Rocks on 15 June 1862 the policemen and bushrangers grapple fiercely hand-to-hand; in fact, the gang drove the escort off with a couple of close-range volleys from the rocks. The robbers' appearance is largely as reported by eyewitnesses, however, with red ‘Crimea’ shirts and woollen caps – see **Plate C2**. (State Library of Victoria)

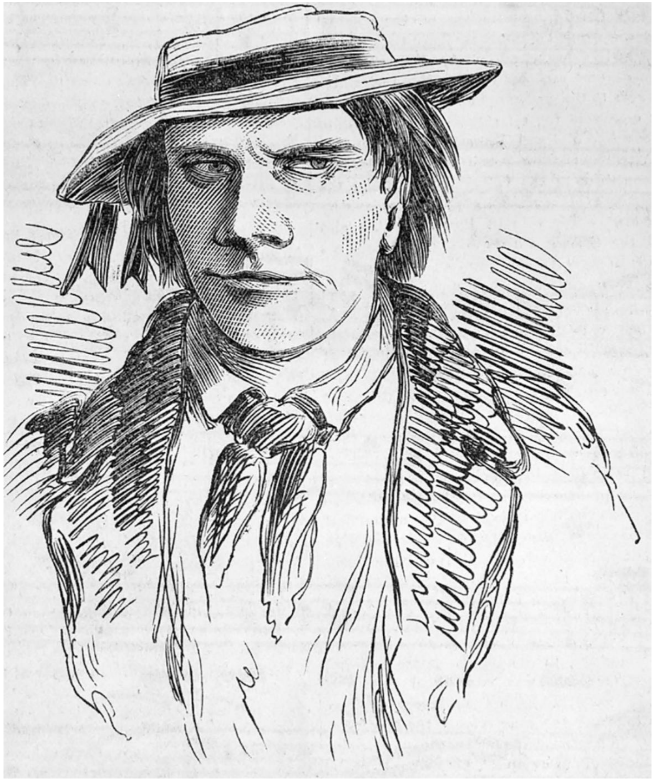
Note

4 This rising by some hundreds of protesting diggers at Ballarat, Victoria was put down by police and troops on 3 December 1854; about 22 rebels and six of their attackers were killed. When the first prisoners were put on trial for treason there was huge public anger in Melbourne, and they were rapidly acquitted. The direct political results are disputed, but a reforming Electoral Act extending the franchise was passed in 1856.

GOLD RUSH BUSHRANGERS

The Gardiner gang

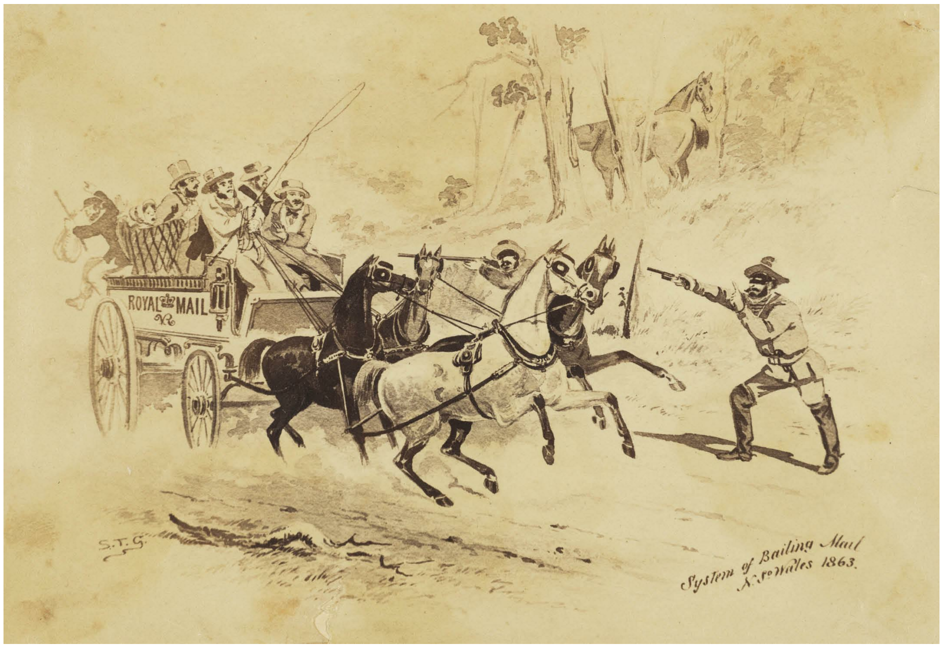
On 15 June 1862 a Ford & Company stagecoach carrying over £14,000 in gold ore and banknotes – estimated at about £8 million in today's values – left Forbes in the goldfields heading for Sydney. It was driven by a civilian and escorted by a police sergeant and three constables, all of whom were armed. At a remote point in the road the track wound past a large detached boulder known as Eugowra Rocks; as the coach approached this the driver saw that the road was blocked by two bullock-wagons, whose drivers appeared to be lying asleep or drunk in the grass. As the coach slowed to pass between the bullock teams and the rocks there was a shout of 'Bail up!', and eight men appeared around the rocks. All were wearing red shirts and woollen caps, had their faces blackened with ashes, and were heavily armed.



Striking sketch of the Canadian bushranger Johnny Gilbert (1842–1865), who served as a lieutenant to both Frank Gardiner and Ben Hall, allegedly taking part in more than 600 robberies before being shot dead in May 1865. Gilbert's style and personality earned him the nicknames 'Flash Johnny' and 'Happy Jack'; see **Plate D2**. Here he wears the ubiquitous 'cabbage-tree' hat decorated with a coloured ribbon. (Public domain/Wikimedia Commons)

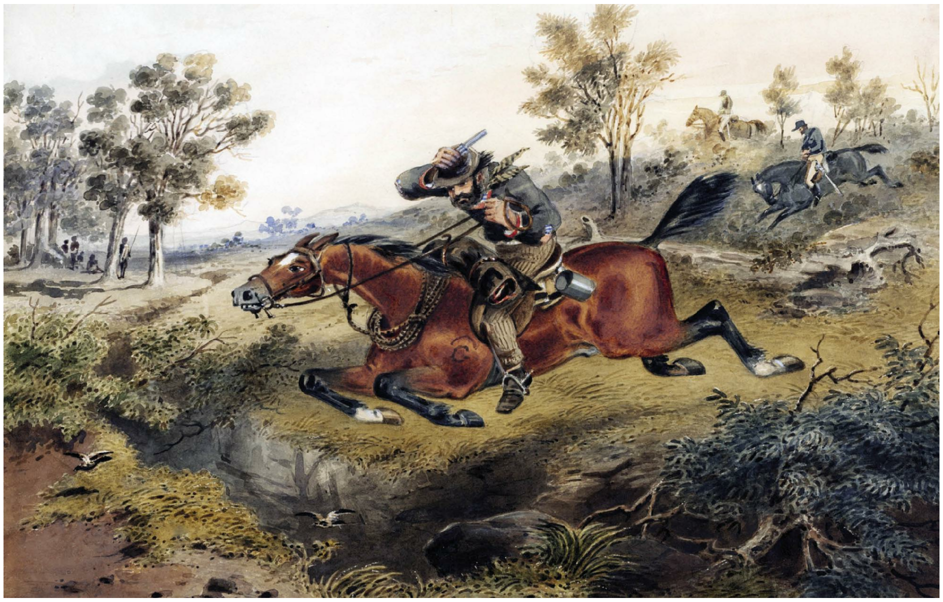
One of the policemen raised his carbine and was met with a fierce volley from the bushrangers; the driver's hat was shot from his head and the policeman was wounded. The driver and police abandoned the coach and, after another brief exchange of fire which wounded a second constable, they fled into the bush. The bushrangers emerged from cover and ransacked the coach, smashing open the bullion boxes and carrying away the notes.

The Eugowra Rocks hold-up – the most successful robbery during the Australian colonial period – had been planned by Frank Gardiner, the self-styled 'Prince of Tobeymen' ('tobeyman' was an old slang term for a highwayman). Gardiner, real name Frank Christie, was born in 1830, although sources vary as to his birthplace; some suggest that he came with his parents as free settlers to New South Wales in 1834, others that he was born there. In 1850 he was convicted of horse-stealing and sentenced to five years' imprisonment, but he escaped and made his way to the goldfields. There he was rumoured to have been involved in attacks on the gold escorts, and in 1854 he was caught selling stolen horses and imprisoned again. Granted a ticket-of-leave in 1860, he set himself up as a butcher, but was soon implicated in rustling. When two troopers tried to arrest him, Gardiner shot and wounded them both – although he was overpowered, he seems to have bribed them to let him go. Gardiner then joined with another bushranger, Johnny Peisley, and the two enjoyed a successful career robbing travellers on the roads in the Forbes district.



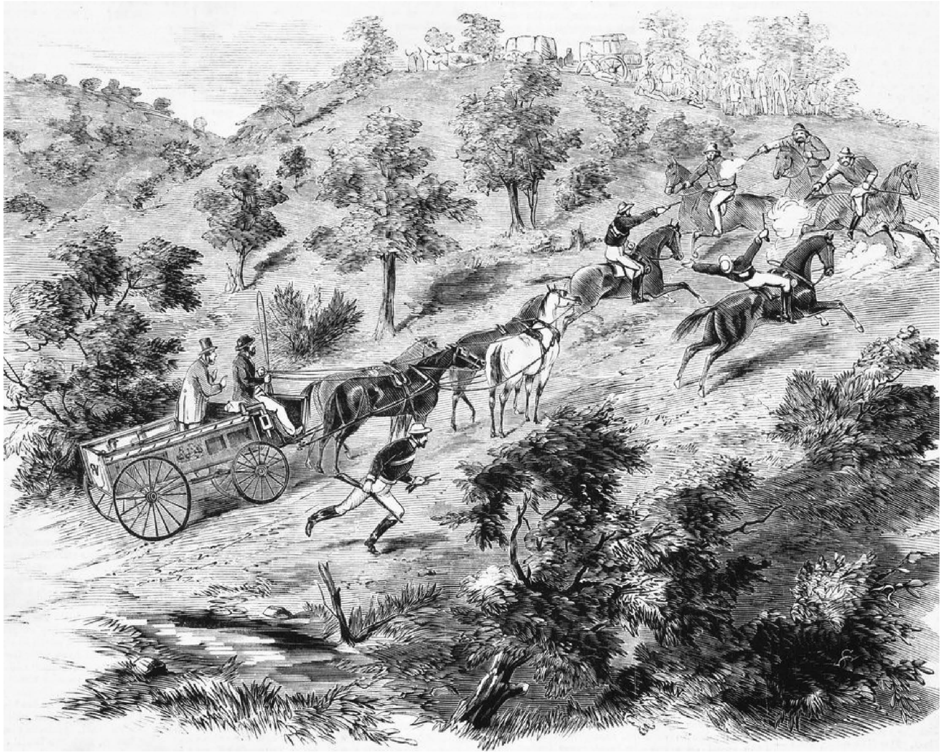
'Bail up!' – a mail-coach robbery in 1863; hold-ups along the goldfields roads in both Victoria and New South Wales were then commonplace. The 1850s and '60s saw a change in the typical character of bushrangers, from the early generations of transported convicts towards often Australian-born highway robbers. Few of these achieved the successes and notoriety of the likes of the Gardiner or Hall gangs, however, and most made meagre pickings preying on ordinary 'diggers' and settlers. (Dixson Library, State Library of New South Wales)

Gardiner, nicknamed 'the Darkie', was good-looking, with long hair, a beard and well-groomed moustache; he was a charismatic and daring personality, who liked to dress stylishly and enjoyed his reputation. He had recruited seven trusted accomplices for the Eugowra robbery, including Ben Hall and Johnny Gilbert, both of whom would become notorious in their own right. Gardiner had selected the location carefully, but the passing bullock-wagons were a lucky coincidence, and Gardiner had held them up and ordered the drivers to block the road with their teams.



Mounted troopers pursuing a lone bushranger in the 1860s; the artist has suggested a costume with typical flourishes – red edging on his jacket, and a patterned neckerchief. Being colonial-born, by the 1860s the new generation of bushrangers appreciated the paramount value of having good horses, and frequently raided farms and ranches in search of them. The Hall gang, in particular, targeted wealthy squatters who had indulged an interest in breeding racehorses. (Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales)

After the robbery the police mounted an intensive search, but the gang scattered; although some of the stolen gold was recovered, Gardiner's share was never found, and he is widely regarded as the only bushranger to have seriously profited from his crimes. Gardiner himself left New South Wales for Queensland, where he ran a store under another alias. He was later recognized and his whereabouts reported to the NSW Police, who, acting beyond their jurisdiction, sent three men to arrest him. Passing themselves off as prospectors, the NSW troopers, with a detachment of the Queensland Native Police in support, surprised Gardiner unarmed outside his store and quickly overpowered him. He was taken back to Sydney and charged with numerous offences including the Eugowra robbery; he was sentenced to 32 years' imprisonment but, after several public petitions, was released in 1874 on condition that he left Australia. He sailed to America, where he ran a saloon in San Francisco. The exact date and circumstances of his death remain obscure.



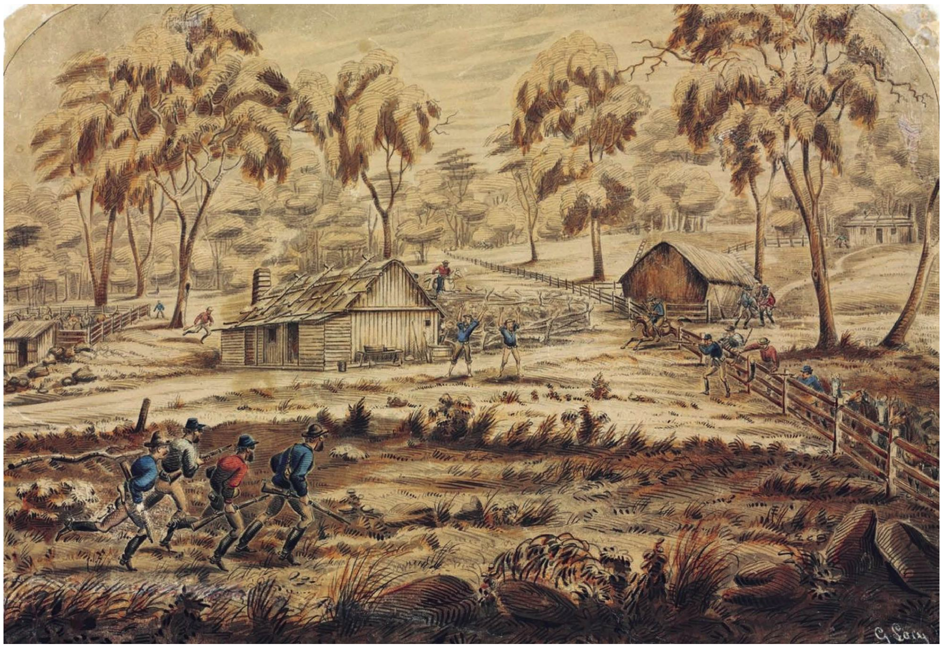
An artist’s impression of the Hall gang – including Ben Hall, Johnny Gilbert and the teenage John Dunn – attacking the Gundagai Mail in 1865. Although Hall never personally killed anyone, both Gilbert and Dunn shot policemen dead during their bandit careers, thus ensuring that all three would die by the bullet or the rope. (Public domain/Wikimedia Commons)

The Hall gang

The Eugowra Rocks robbery underlined the emergence of a new generation of bushrangers. Most were not transportees but rather the sons of convicts or free settlers; born in Australia, they had grown up in the bush and were good horsemen. No longer fugitives from the penal system, although some were driven to bushranging by misfortune, most were adventurous men attracted by the chance of easy money and an exciting life. Like the generation before them, however, few would live to see a comfortable old age.

One of the most intriguing of the gold-rush era bushrangers was Ben Hall, who was born in New South Wales in 1837 to parents who had both been transported for petty theft. He had married at 19, and might have lived a quiet life had his wife not left him. Hall met Frank Gardiner shortly afterwards, and was arrested for taking part in one of Gardiner’s robberies; Hall always insisted that the charge was unjust, and indeed it was subsequently dropped. This seems to have embittered him, however, and he was undoubtedly one of Gardiner’s gang at Eugowra Rocks. Hall then led a gang including the young Canadian bushranger Johnny Gilbert. Subsisting by robbing road travellers, the gang were not averse to a dramatic gesture: in October 1863 they took over the entire town of Canowindra. The town constable was locked in his cell and the population, together with passing travellers, were taken to Robinson's Hotel. Here the gang held court for three days, treating their hostages well before paying the innkeeper and distributing cash to the 'guests' to cover expenses as they left.

Although the infuriated police stepped up their pursuit the gang continued to work the roads around the goldfields. Hall himself frequently claimed that he would shoot no man who was not trying to kill him, and indeed he never committed murder. Throughout 1864, however, the gang suffered from the intense police pressure, two of its members being killed and a third surrendering. In November 1864 the gang held up a mail coach near Jugiong, and in the ensuing gunfight Johnny Gilbert shot dead one of the escort, Sgt Parry. In January 1865, during a raid on a hotel in the village of Collector, teenage gang member John Dunn shot dead a Constable Nelson. The Hall gang was now considered the most dangerous in New South Wales, and in early 1865 the authorities passed the Felon's Apprehension Act, which allowed for designated individuals to be denied the protection of the law and to be shot on sight.



Crude impression of the capture of the Clarke brothers on 27 April 1867; blue-jacketed policemen and local constables in civilian clothing manoeuvre to surround the farm buildings from which the bushrangers returned fire for several hours before surrendering. (State Library of New South Wales/Wikimedia Commons/CC-BY-SA 3.0)

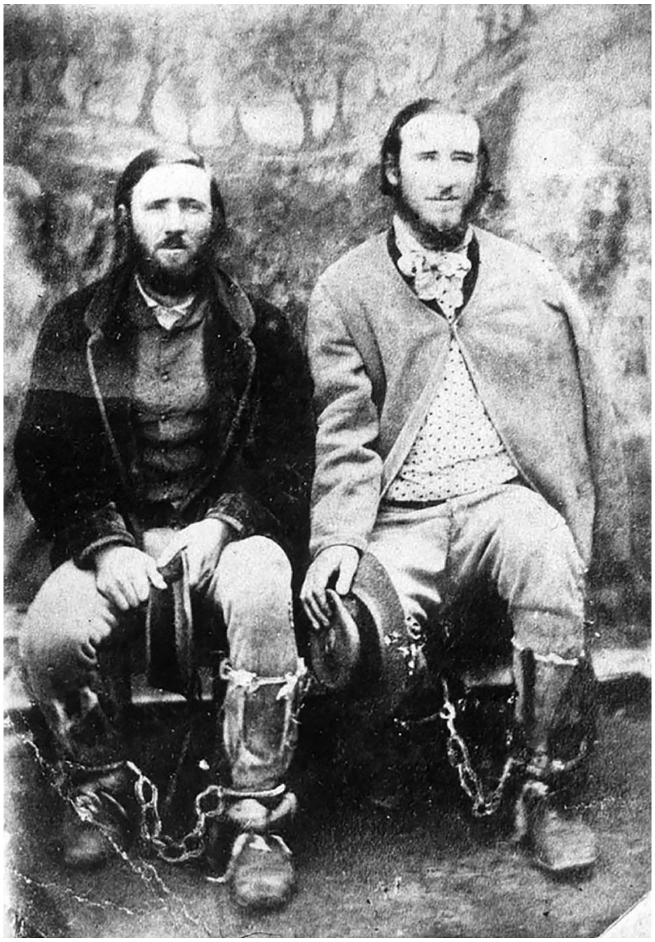
By the end of April 1865 the Hall gang realized they would have to leave New South Wales; they retreated to an isolated area in the bush north-west of Forbes, and separated to procure fresh horses and provisions. Ben Hall was alone and camping along the

Goobang Creek, relying on local sympathisers to shield him, when the offered reward tempted somebody to betray him. A heavily armed police patrol set out, wearing plain clothes and guided by an Aboriginal tracker, and at dawn on 5 May Hall awoke to find himself surrounded. As he tried to run the police opened fire; Hall staggered against a sapling and called out, ‘I am wounded – Shoot me dead!’ He died seconds later, hit by at least 30 bullets. The circumstances of his death would later cause some controversy, since the Felon’s Apprehension Act had not yet come into legal force.

Johnny Gilbert

Hall’s death left Johnny Gilbert as the most wanted surviving member of his gang. Gilbert had been born in Ontario, Canada in 1842, and his parents had been lured to Australia by the gold rush. He was just 18 when he met Frank Gardiner, and he seems to have embraced the life of a bushranger from the first; an extrovert character, he was widely known as ‘Happy Jack’ or ‘Flash Johnny’ from his carefree attitude and flamboyant dress. He is credited with being involved in more than 630 hold-ups, a record which rivals any of the better-known outlaws of the American West.

Following Hall’s death, a determined effort was made to capture Gilbert and, less than a week later, he and John Dunn were reported to be hiding in a hut near Binalong which belonged to Dunn’s grandfather. Four constables set out to arrest them; they arrived early in the morning and surrounded the hut, watching it for an hour in the pouring rain. When two of them then approached it they were promptly fired upon, and a general gunfight broke out. Gilbert and Dunn managed to slip out of the building and fled across a creek; Gilbert turned to fire from behind a tree, but suddenly fell. The constables left him and chased after Dunn, who escaped (although he was later caught, and hanged in March 1866). When they returned to the body they found that Gilbert was dead; searching his clothing, they found several guns, powder and shot, money and jewellery.

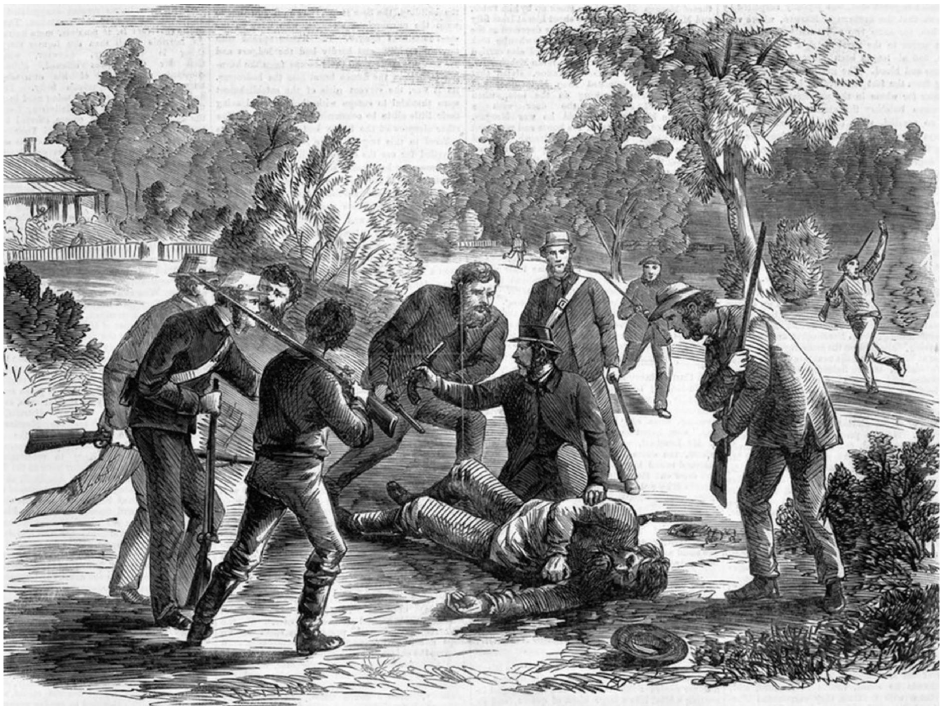


A fascinating photograph of Thomas (left) and John Clarke in chains, taken in Braidwood prison not long after their capture. This provides a useful record of the clothing styles adopted by some 1860s' bushrangers. Thomas wears a dark, braid-edged jacket over a contrasting waistcoat. John – with his jacket fashionably buttoned at the neck only, and loose over his left shoulder to disguise a wounded arm – wears a polka-dot patterned shirt and an extravagantly arranged necktie. Both are holding 'cabbage-tree' hats decorated with coloured ribbons. Convicted of the murder of four policemen, the brothers were hanged. (Dixson Library, State Library of New South Wales)

Appearance and weapons

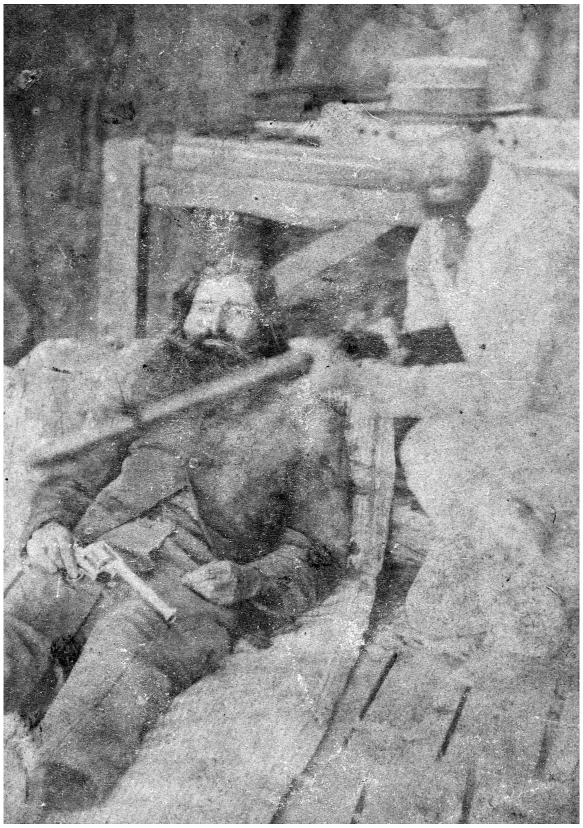
With the burgeoning population and economy fuelled by the gold rush Australian society changed, and with it the appearance of the bushrangers. No longer desperate men seeking merely to survive in the wilderness, many had taken to the road by choice, and their appearance reflected the new society. The 'cabbage-tree' hat, still decorated with ribbons around the crown, remained a staple, but many bushrangers wore clothes that were popular in the goldfields, in particular the 'Crimea' shirt. This substantial woollen pullover garment buttoning at the chest was favoured by the diggers because it was loose, long – it could be worn tucked into the trousers or hanging free – and thus practical for outdoor work. It was available in a range of bright colours, of which red was the most popular among bushrangers and law-abiding citizens alike.

Most bushrangers relieved their victims of clothing that was either smart or practical – Frank Gardiner popularized a style of moleskin trousers and knee-length Wellington or Hessian boots. Long 'duck coats' were popular, as was the shorter 'sack coat' which was fashionably worn with only the top button fastened, often over a waistcoat. Many bushrangers, including the Hall gang, wore coloured sashes around their waists which gave them an air of piratical gallantry, as did neckties worn in a flamboyant bow; Johnny Gilbert, being notably 'flash', is said to have worn two sashes. Often bushrangers would wear a conspicuous number of rings on their fingers, and several pocket watches – all stolen. Most, like Frank Gardiner, wore their hair long, apparently mocking the cropped prison style. Few of the leading bushrangers troubled to conceal their appearance, but rather gloried in their notoriety; some, however, did attempt to disguise themselves. They might blacken their faces with sooty ashes, cut eye-holes in flour sacks to wear as hoods, or make simple eye-masks from readily available materials.



Artist's impression of the death of 'Mad Dog Morgan' (see **Plate D3**), shot in the back by a farmhand during his raid on Peechelba Station on 9 April 1865. (Public domain/Wikimedia Commons)

Bushrangers of this period regularly stole weapons from their victims, favouring one type according to taste and retaining others as spares. Descriptions of the Hall gang refer to the number of both long-arms and pistols they carried; because cap-and-ball revolvers were slow to reload most bushrangers preferred to carry two or even three loaded weapons thrust into their belts. By this time large numbers of firearms had entered Australia with the diggers, mostly British and American types, and although old flintlocks were still common in the colony these were crude in comparison to the percussion weapons now available. The military Enfield rifle or carbine was widely available on the goldfields, and bushrangers were always keen to appropriate Calisher & Terry carbines from the police. Large numbers of Colt Navy-pattern revolvers were available, since these were standard police issue. English makes such as Adams and Tranter were also in widespread use; Ben Hall himself favoured the third-pattern double-trigger Tranter revolver, while Johnny Gilbert armed himself with a Tranter revolving rifle he had stolen from a squatter in March 1865, and which he was carrying when shot dead. Powder flasks and ball or bullets were usually carried in haversacks worn slung from shoulder to hip.



Badly faded, this is one of several post-mortem photographs of ‘Dan Morgan’ taken some hours after his death; the revolver has obviously been added for dramatic effect. Later his beard was flayed off as a souvenir, and his head removed for ‘scientific’ study. (State Library of Victoria)

OTHER BUSHRANGERS, 1850s–1870s

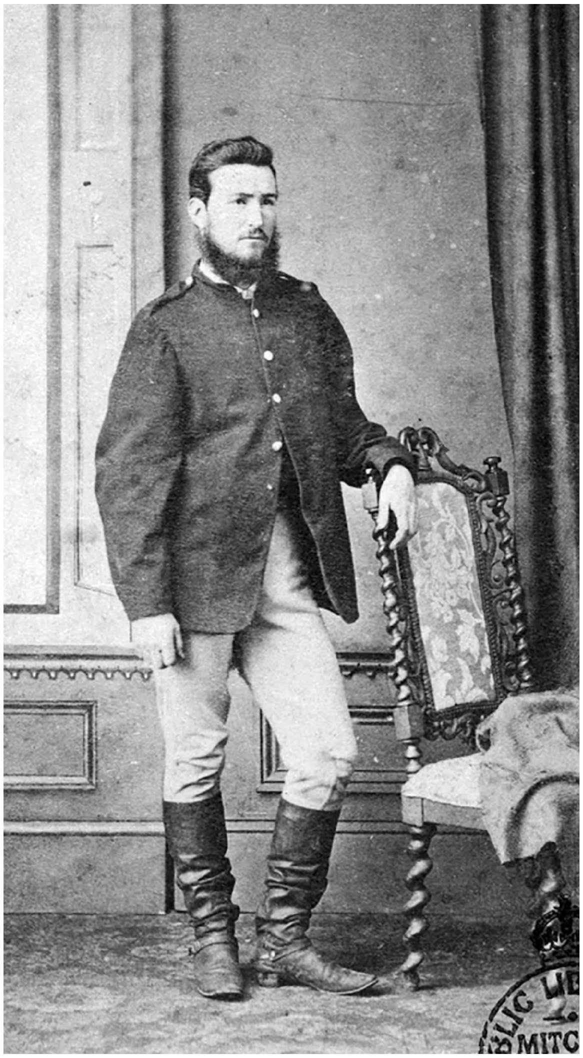
Although the Gardiner and Hall gangs captured public attention, there were many other bushrangers working around the goldfields. Some achieved a notoriety of their own, while others pulled off only a handful of minor robberies before sinking into obscurity.

‘Mad Dan Morgan’

Perhaps the most notorious of Hall’s contemporaries was John Fuller, who was born in New South Wales in 1830, and in 1854 was convicted of highway robbery. Although a compliant prisoner who earned his ticket-of-leave for good behaviour, after his release he returned almost immediately to bushranging under a number of aliases; the most common of these was ‘Dan Morgan’, by which he is generally remembered today.

Unlike Ben Hall, Morgan was noted for his fierce mood-swings and frequent acts of violence. In 1863 he and a fellow bushranger were surprised by the police and, finding himself cornered, Morgan apparently shot his companion to distract them. Often operating alone, he targeted wealthy squatters. In June 1864 he raided a farmhouse, holding up the occupants and getting drunk on their rum. As he went to ride away Morgan accidentally discharged one of his own weapons and, thinking he was being fired upon, shot and wounded the farm-manager and a worker. In drunken remorse, he ordered another farmhand to ride for a doctor, but then, fearing he would be betrayed, rode after him and shot him dead.

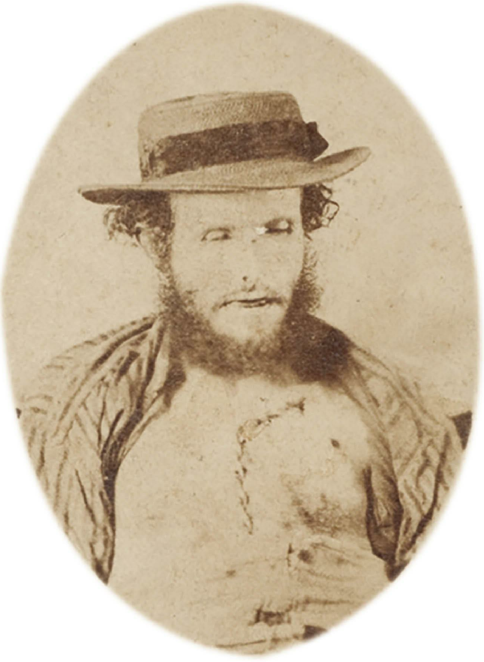
The following month he encountered two police officers on the road and without warning shot one dead, and on 4 September he mortally wounded a sergeant who was pursuing him. This brutality has earned Morgan the nicknames ‘Mad Dan’ and ‘Mad Dog’, although it is unclear if they were used in his lifetime. On 8 April 1865 Morgan held up the Peechelba Station; he rounded up the owners and servants, but released one woman to attend to a child. She promptly raised the alarm, and the following morning the station was surrounded by police. As Morgan emerged he was shot through the back by a farmhand, and died shortly afterwards.



Constable Alexander Binning Walker, the trooper who killed Frederick Ward – 'Captain Thunderbolt' – in a gunfight on 25 May 1870. Accompanied in the bush by his mixed-race wife Mary Ann Bugg, Ward had outlived his contemporaries Hall and Gilbert by five years. Compare this photograph of New South Wales Mounted Police uniform with **Plate F1**. (Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales)

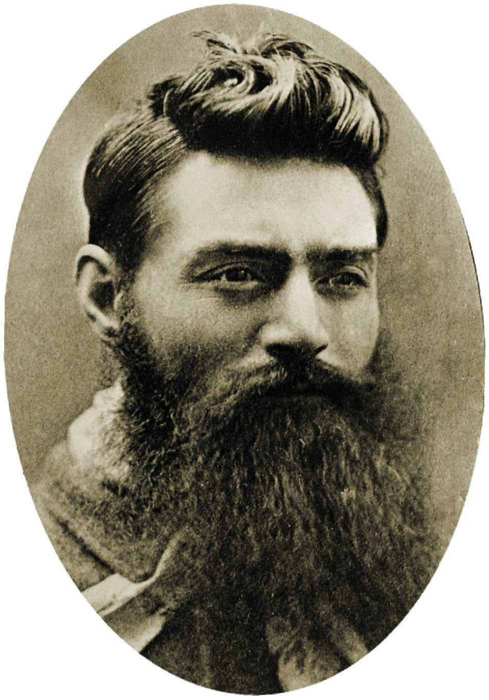
The Clarke brothers

Morgan's tendency to sudden violence was unusual among the 1860s bushrangers, but not unique. The Clarke brothers, Thomas and John, were born in the Braidwood district of New South Wales in the 1840s, and from an early age rode with a family gang of cattle and horse rustlers. From 1865 they graduated to robbing gold shipments, coaches and travellers around the goldfields, reportedly notching up more than 60 robberies.



Another example of the grisly practice of arranging dead outlaws' bodies for post-mortem photos. In this case the photographer has partly re-dressed the gaunt corpse of 'Captain Thunderbolt' in his 'cabbage-tree' hat and striped shirt. (State Library of New South Wales)

On the night of 9 January 1867, a party of four plain-clothes constables out looking for them were ambushed while passing through thick bush; their bodies were found the next morning, two lying in a clearing riddled with bullets, the other two nearby having perhaps surrendered before being shot. A bloody pound note was pinned to one of the bodies as a warning. These killings naturally provoked an intense search, and the gang's network of supporters began to desert them. On 25 April a group of 15 plain-clothes policemen led by an Aboriginal tracker surrounded the Clarkes in a homestead in the bush. A fierce gunfight ensued, in which John Clarke was wounded in the left arm and a policeman and the tracker were injured. The Clarkes were eventually persuaded to surrender; as they emerged from the hut they shook hands with their captors. Two Tranter revolving rifles, which had been in the possession of the murdered constables, were found in their possession. They were tried, convicted, and hanged.

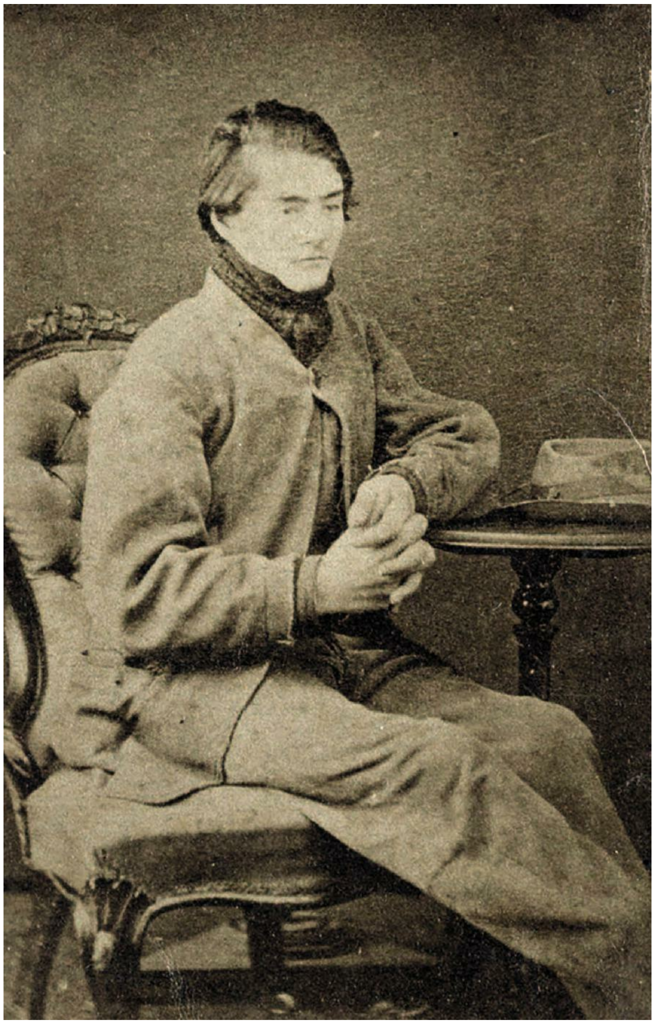


A photograph of Ned Kelly taken at the height of his fame; see **Plate G1**. He was then about 25 years old, just under 6ft tall and of generally athletic build; he was a strong swimmer, and a noted bare-knuckle boxer. (Public domain/Wikimedia Commons)

Although most bushrangers were Europeans they were not exclusively so. ‘Sam Poo’ came to Australia from China during the gold rush, and preyed upon travellers on the roads around Mudgee for several months in 1865. When a policeman stumbled upon his camp Poo shot and mortally wounded him; he was himself wounded a few weeks later in a gunfight which led to his capture. He was hanged in December 1865.

Frederick Ward/‘Captain Thunderbolt’

By the 1870s the so-called ‘golden age’ of bushranging was drawing to a close as law enforcement around the goldfields became more efficient. On 25 May 1870, shortly after he had ‘bailed up’ an inn and forced the innkeeper to serve him drinks at gunpoint, Frederick Ward was shot dead by Constable Walker after a chase which ended in a gunfight in the middle of a creek. Ward was the son of a convict, who had drifted into bushranging after being convicted of horse-stealing and subsequently escaping from prison in 1863. He had taken the alias ‘Captain Thunderbolt’, following an old English and Irish tradition of investing highwaymen with a romantic title; this apparently dated back to the aftermath of the 17th-century English Civil Wars, when a number of ruined Royalist officers had taken to the road.

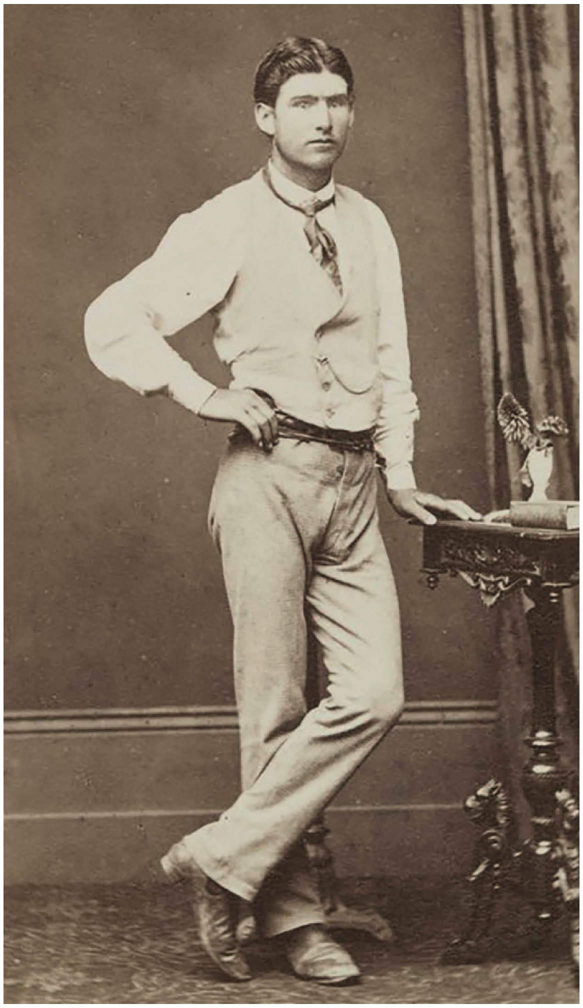


Dan Kelly, Ned's younger brother, also in about 1878; see **Plate G2**. The Kelly brothers were well known to the police from their teenage years, but it was not until 15 April 1878, when a Constable Fitzpatrick tried to arrest Dan for horse-stealing, that the two brothers took to the bush as full-time bandits. (State Library of Victoria)

Andrew Scott/'Captain Moonlite'

The undeniably tragic story of Andrew George Scott, dubbed 'Captain Moonlite' [*sic*], provides a postscript to this period. Scott's Irish family emigrated to New Zealand, where he served and was wounded in the New Zealand Wars. After moving to Australia he became a lay preacher, but in 1869 a bank clerk identified Scott by his voice as having been the man who, wearing a black crêpe mask, had forced him to open the safe at gunpoint. Although Scott denied this crime, he was later convicted of fraud and imprisoned. He managed to escape, only to be recaptured and sentenced to ten years' hard labour. Released early in 1879, he undertook a lecture tour on the subject of prison reform. The authorities remained wary of him, however, and he was openly named in the press for crimes of which he was probably innocent.

Scott's behaviour became increasingly erratic, and towards the end of 1879 he took to wandering the bush along the New South Wales/Victoria border with a gang of young men whom he had met in prison (with one of whom, James Nesbitt, he seems to have been romantically involved). While the press dubbed 'Moonlite's' gang marauding bushrangers, it has since been suggested that they were in fact just marginalized outcasts, seeking work and resorting to theft only when they could not find it. On 15 November 1879 they arrived at the Wantabadgery Station near Wagga Wagga, begging for food and work; when it was refused, Scott lost his temper and 'bailed the place up'. As the gang broke cover from the buildings during the subsequent gunfight with police two of them were mortally hit, including James Nesbitt; when he saw his friend dying Scott broke down in tears, and was overpowered. A constable had also been shot dead; Scott and another gang member were found guilty of his murder, and hanged on 20 January 1880.

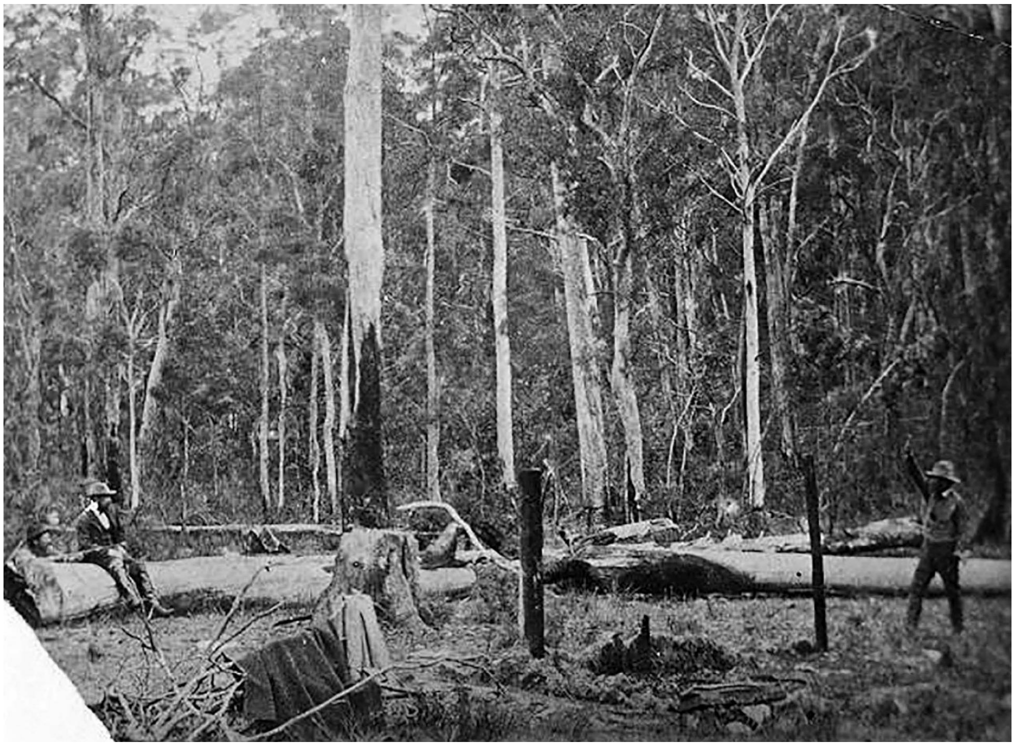


The elegantly dressed Steve Hart poses for a studio portrait; compare with **Plate G3**. Although they had other hangers-on, Ned and Dan Kelly, Hart and Joe Byrne formed the core of the gang; all except Ned died in the shoot-out at Glenrowan. (State Library of Victoria)

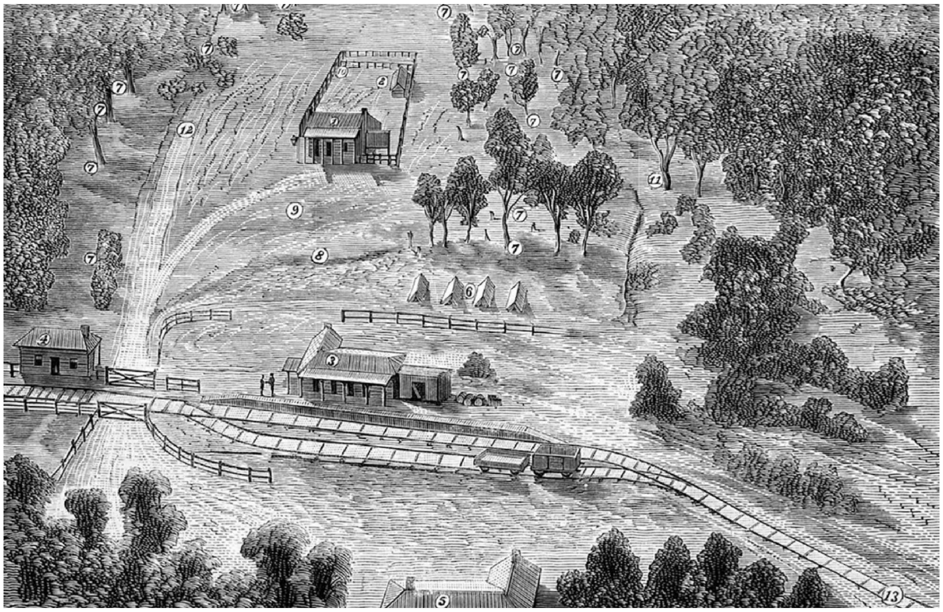
THE KELLY GANG, 1878–1880

Tensions between ‘squatters’ and ‘selectors’

The last and best-known eruption of bushranging coincided with yet another transformation of Australian society.

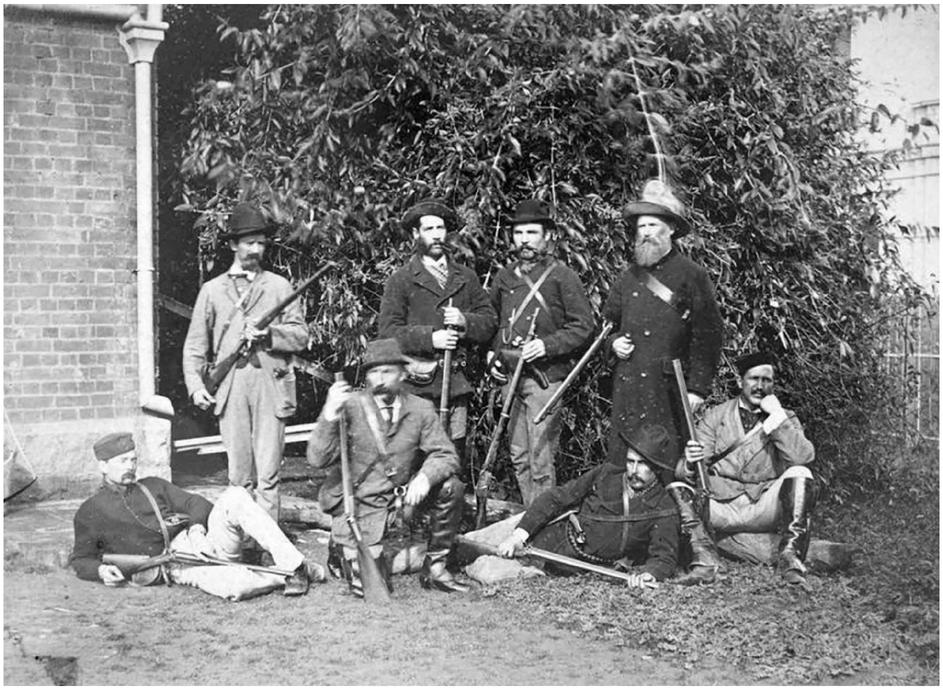


The nature of the bush in the Wombat Hills where the Kelly gang hid out: this photograph shows policemen reconstructing the Stringybark Creek ‘massacre’ of 26 October 1878 on the site where it happened and shortly after the event. Of Sergeant Kennedy and Constables Lonigan, McIntyre and Scanlon, only McIntyre survived to make good his escape. (Public domain/Wikimedia Commons)



A bird's-eye view of Glenrowan. The Jones Hotel, where the gang held their many hostages, is at top left; between it and the rail station are the tents of the rail workers. Ned Kelly was eventually captured to the right of the clump of trees in the centre. (State Library of Victoria)

By the 1870s the gold rush had given birth to boom-towns, railways and telegraph lines through the bush, and the emergence of an affluent urban middle class; but the goldfields were now winding down, and thousands of people had to find other ways to make a living. By this time many of the original 'squatters' granted land by the Crown in the early years of the colony had grown wealthy by raising stock on large stations, and there was a move to satisfy the new hunger for land by making smaller parcels available. The authorities now gave out smallholdings to a poorer class, called 'selectors': these were required to live permanently upon their land, improve it, and cultivate a proportion of it before they qualified for permanent title. Life for the selectors was hard and impoverished, and it brought them into conflict with the established squatters. These large-scale ranchers not only resented competition for land, but also found that their herds and flocks bore the brunt of hard times among the selectors. Squatters routinely offered rewards to the police for securing convictions for stock theft, and the selectors soon came to see the police as being in the pockets of the wealthy.



Sergeant Steele and members of the Wangaratta police detachment posing after the fight at Glenrowan; Steele was the man who finally brought down Ned with a shotgun blast to the legs. Their appearance is typical of the officers who fought on that day – hard-wearing civilian bush clothes, and a variety of weapons including shotguns (front row), a Martini-Henry rifle (centre) and revolvers. (State Library of Victoria)

Edward ‘Ned’ Kelly was born in December 1854 in Victoria, the son of an Irish convict who had been transported for stealing two pigs but who, after serving his sentence, had done well enough on the goldfields to buy a smallholding. Ned was the third of eight children, an adventurous boy who grew up to be an excellent horseman, at ease in the bush. In 1865 his father was convicted of having in his possession a bullock hide and meat for which he could not account. Unable to pay his fine, he served six months in jail, and this seems to have broken him. On his release he drank heavily, and died shortly afterwards, leaving Ned as head of the household.

Police and officials posing in the woods where Ned Kelly was captured. Among those visible here, distinguishable by their dark complexions and short stature, are some of the Aboriginal trackers from the Queensland Native Police who were present on that day. (State Library of Victoria)

A few years later the family obtained land as selectors near the town of Greta, but soon found themselves in conflict with local squatters. They were often accused of stealing cattle or horses, but seldom convicted. An Irish bushranger, Harry Power, operated on the roads around Greta, and the Kelly family were part of his support network. The teenage Ned undoubtedly joined Power in several highway robberies towards the end of 1869, but although he was arrested no witnesses could be persuaded to identify him.

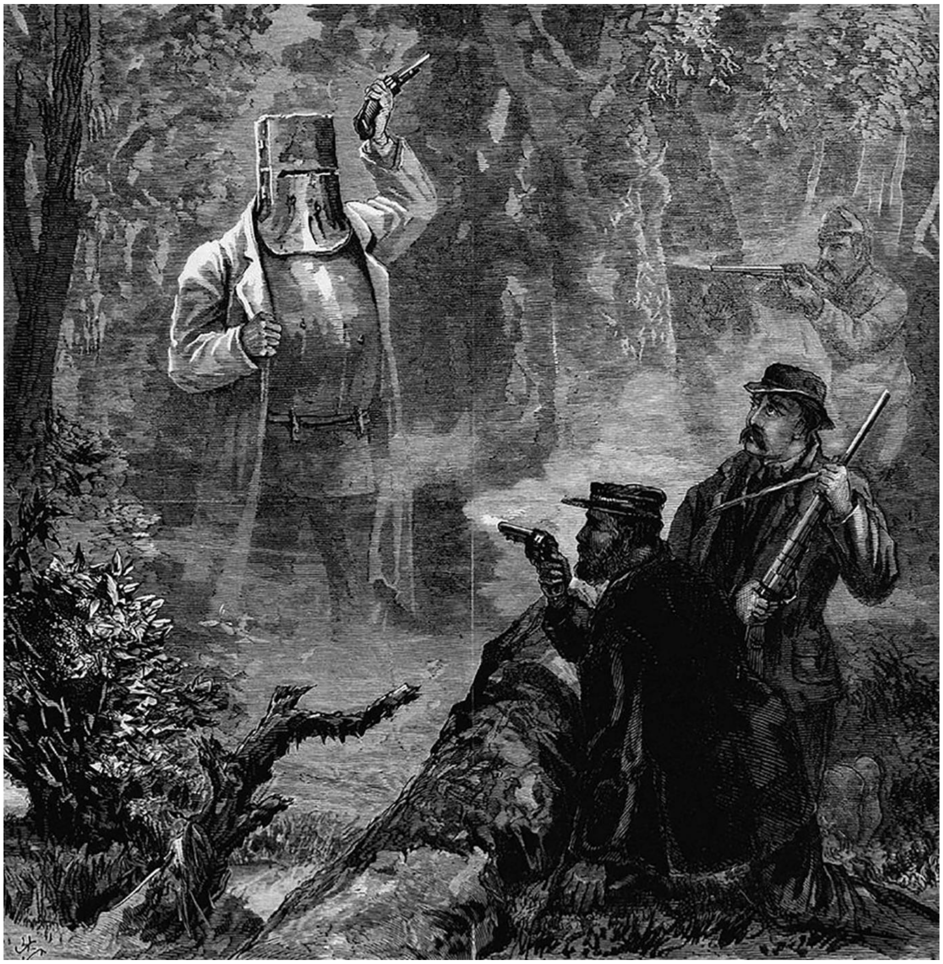
In October 1870, Ned was sentenced to three months for assault. Not long after his release a constable saw him riding a horse which didn't belong to him (it may simply have been borrowed), and tried to arrest him. In the scuffle Kelly was overpowered with the help of bystanders and badly beaten, and he was subsequently charged with receiving stolen property. In September 1877 Kelly got drunk in the town of Benalla and brawled with policemen who tried to arrest him, earning himself a fine.

The change from what was, in his class, an unremarkably tempestuous youth to serious crime was sparked by a disputed incident on 15 April 1878, when a Constable Alexander Fitzpatrick went to the Kelly homestead in search of Ned's younger brother Dan, who was wanted on a charge of horse-theft. Neither Dan nor Ned were at home, but Fitzpatrick – who had been drinking – chose to wait. What happened when Dan returned has never been exactly established, but it ended with Fitzpatrick wounded in the wrist and relieved of his pistol, Kelly's mother Ellen and two neighbours arrested and jailed, and the brothers on the run.

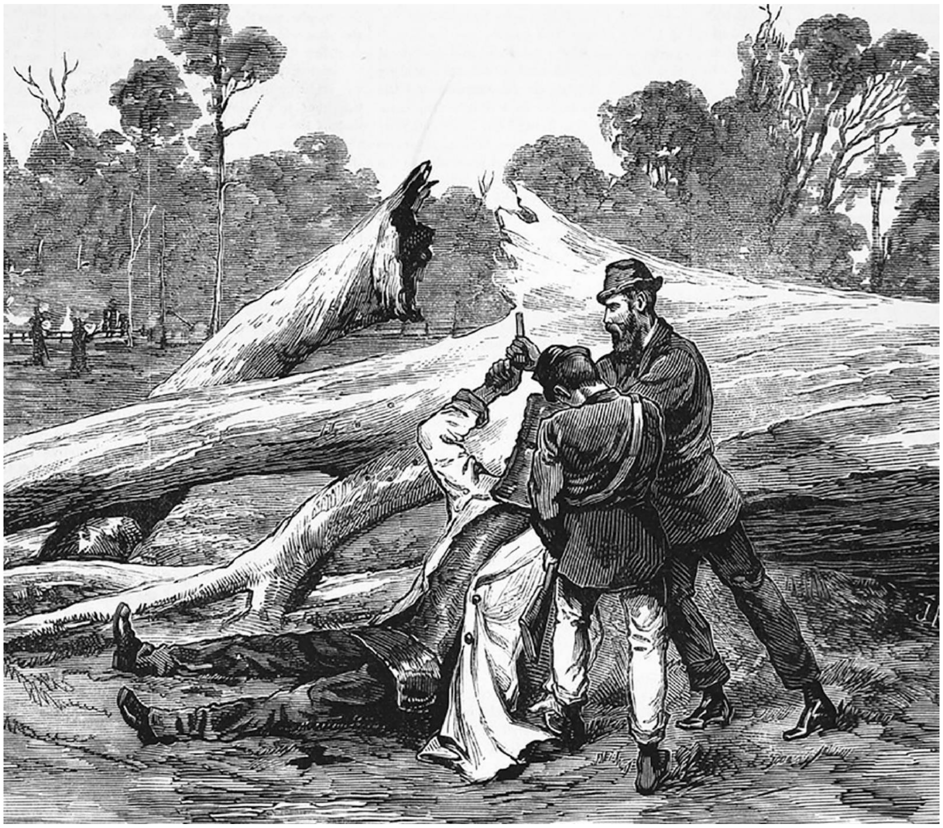
Ned and Dan were joined in the bush by two friends, Steve Hart and Joe Byrne. They were now characterized as the 'Greta mob', bushrangers and horse-thieves, and the police searched for them in the Wombat Hills. One party, led by Sgt Kennedy with Constables Scanlon, Lonigan and McIntyre, camped near Stringybark Creek posing as prospectors. Unaware that the Kelly gang were nearby, the officers separated, two going on patrol and the others remaining in camp. That afternoon the gang surprised the camp; Constable McIntyre, who was unarmed, put up his hands, but Lonigan dropped behind a log and reached for his weapon, and Ned killed him with a shot from a sawn-off carbine. When Kennedy and Scanlon returned later Kelly ordered McIntyre to greet them while the gang waited in ambush around the clearing. Kennedy supposedly went for his gun, and the gang opened fire; McIntyre made his escape, but both Kennedy and Scanlon were killed.

Although the gang still commanded fierce loyalty among the poor settlers in the Greta area, as police-killers they were now outlawed fugitives. On 9 December 1878 the gang 'bailed up' a station on the outskirts of the town of Euroa in Victoria. They took food for themselves and their horses, and stole smart clothes so as not to attract attention when, the following day – leaving Joe Byrne to guard their prisoners – Ned, Dan and Steve Hart robbed the Euroa bank at gunpoint, taking hundreds of pounds in gold ingots and banknotes. The furious police reacted by rounding up relatives and sympathizers – a counterproductive move which further alienated the local selectors.

Crossing the border into New South Wales, two months later the gang struck again. Late on the evening of Friday, 8 February 1879 they surprised the town policemen at Jerilderee and locked them in their own cells; they then waited calmly until the Monday morning, when they walked into the bank and robbed it of more than £2,000. They cut the telegraph wire, collected up guns, and confidently mingled with bystanders in the town's hotels before riding away. Before he left, Kelly presented a bank clerk with a carefully prepared letter – essentially a press statement, for publication. Running to 56 pages, it outlined the sufferings of the selector class at the hands of the police and the squatters, and justified Ned's own actions, ending with a warning of dire consequences to come. Quite what Ned intended is the subject of debate, but some have chosen even to interpret the statement as a sort of revolutionary manifesto.



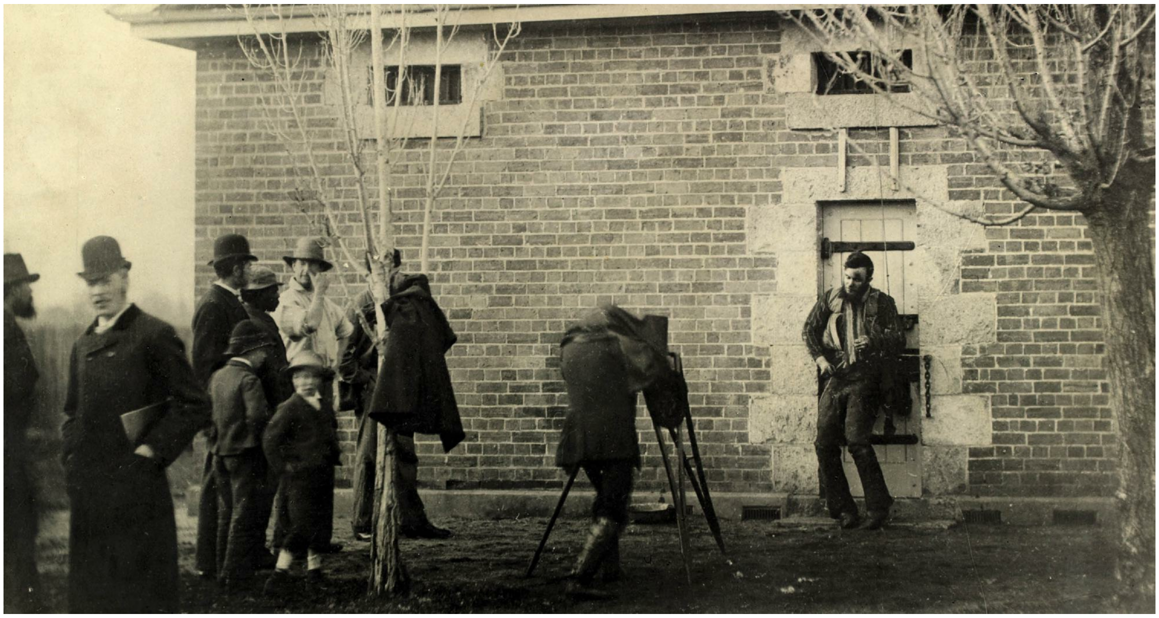
'A Strange Apparition' – artist's impression of Ned Kelly appearing through the morning mist for his last stand, much to the surprise of the police; see **Plate H3**. (Public domain/Wikimedia Commons)



Finally brought down, with some 28 wounds from bullets and shotgun pellets, Ned Kelly is disarmed; even as Sgt Steele rushed forwards to capture him he fired a last shot, which blew the policeman's hat off. (Public domain/Wikimedia Commons)

For the next 18 months the gang disappeared into the bush, while police searches were hampered by both disagreements between the Victoria and New South Wales forces and the silence of the community. Meanwhile, as well as acquiring more weapons, the gang collected with the help of their sympathizers a large number of iron mouldboards from ploughs. By April 1879 they had fashioned what amounted to a secret weapon – four crude, heavy suits of armour which would protect their heads and bodies against even the most powerful firearms in the police arsenal. Wearing these, they intended to face the authorities head-on.

During this time policemen seeking informers around Greta decided to use an associate of Joe Byrne's, Aaron Sherritt, as bait. It is not clear exactly what part Sherritt was playing, but four constables were placed with him in his cabin, hoping to draw the gang out. On the evening of 26 June Sherritt cautiously answered his door to the knock of a neighbouring settler – only to see the man pushed aside by Joe Byrne, who blasted him with both barrels of a shotgun. Sherritt's death was more than an act of revenge against a possible traitor: Ned Kelly intended it to draw the police into a confrontation. He expected them to hurry reinforcements out from Melbourne by train, and had already made plans to derail them at a roadside station nearby called Glenrowan.



The body of Joe Byrne is trussed up against the police station door at Benalla for a photographer, as curious bystanders look on. The final shoot-out at Glenrowan gave the Kelly gang – bank-robbers, police-killers and (some claim) even proto-revolutionaries – a mythic status which has not diminished over the years. (Public domain/Wikimedia Commons)

The 'siege of Glenrowan'

Ann Jones's inn at Glenrowan was a typical bush pub, a wooden building set back from the rail station in a clearing and surrounded by a paddock and outbuildings. The gang arrived at about 8am on Sunday, 27 June 1880, and rounded up everyone in the vicinity. Because there were a number of railway workers camped there this proved to be a surprisingly large number – as many as 62, by some counts. They were herded into the inn, where the gang insisted that drinks be served and music played to entertain them. Kelly expected police reinforcements to arrive quickly, and two of the rail-workers were forced to damage the track to derail the train. In fact, Aaron Sherritt's embarrassed minders had delayed raising the alarm, and an entire day dragged past before, at about 3am on Monday morning, two special trains from Melbourne drew near.

One of the hostages persuaded Ned to set him free, and promptly ran down the track to raise the alarm. The policemen were accompanied by a detachment from the Queensland Native Police; all of them, 16 in number, were in plain clothes and heavily armed. The train stopped short of Glenrowan and the police fanned out around the inn, taking cover behind trees and rail fences. As soon as the gang heard the train approach they put on their armour and made their way out of the building onto the veranda, leaving the hostages lying on the floor in anticipation of the gunfight which immediately broke out.

The police and the gang blazed away at each other for about 15 minutes, filling the clearing with powder-smoke in the pre-dawn gloom. Several bullets passed through the inn, mortally wounding a 13-year-old boy and injuring others; Police Superintendent

Hare was badly wounded in the wrist, but the gang suffered worse. Although their armour protected their heads and bodies, their limbs were exposed; Joe Byrne was hit in the calf, and Ned suffered severe wounds in the left arm and another in the foot. Unable to hold their ground, the gang retreated into the hotel building. More policemen arrived from Benalla and Wangaratta, bringing the total up to over 30 officers but confusing the chain of command. In the gloom the police mistakenly fired on hostages trying to flee the building.

At some point Ned himself left the inn and, still wearing his armour, he passed out in the bush nearby from loss of blood. He recovered shortly after daybreak; hauling himself upright, he began to stagger forward – and into not only bushranger legend, but Australian mythology. It was a cold, crisp winter's morning, and mist and gun-smoke hung under the trees as Ned Kelly lumbered forward, firing a Colt revolver with his uninjured hand; his armour made him seem unnaturally large, spooking the policemen. A fusillade was directed against him, but although he staggered it seemed to have little effect. He is said to have shouted, 'You can't hurt me – I'm bullet-proof!', and his armour shows signs of being struck at least 18 times. After a few minutes, however, Sgt Steele, lying on the ground for cover, fired two shotgun blasts into Kelly's legs, and he fell at last.

Inside the hotel Joe Byrne lay dead, having bled to death after being hit again in the groin as he leaned across the bar to raise a toast. For several hours Dan Kelly and Steve Hart continued to fire from the building, but at around 10am a white handkerchief was waved from the front door and about 30 of the hostages made a dash for freedom. By early afternoon the shooting had ceased, and despite the presence of some hostages still inside the police set fire to the inn. A priest bravely dashed inside, finding Byrne's body and, in a back room, Steve Hart and Dan Kelly lying side by side; they had apparently committed suicide.

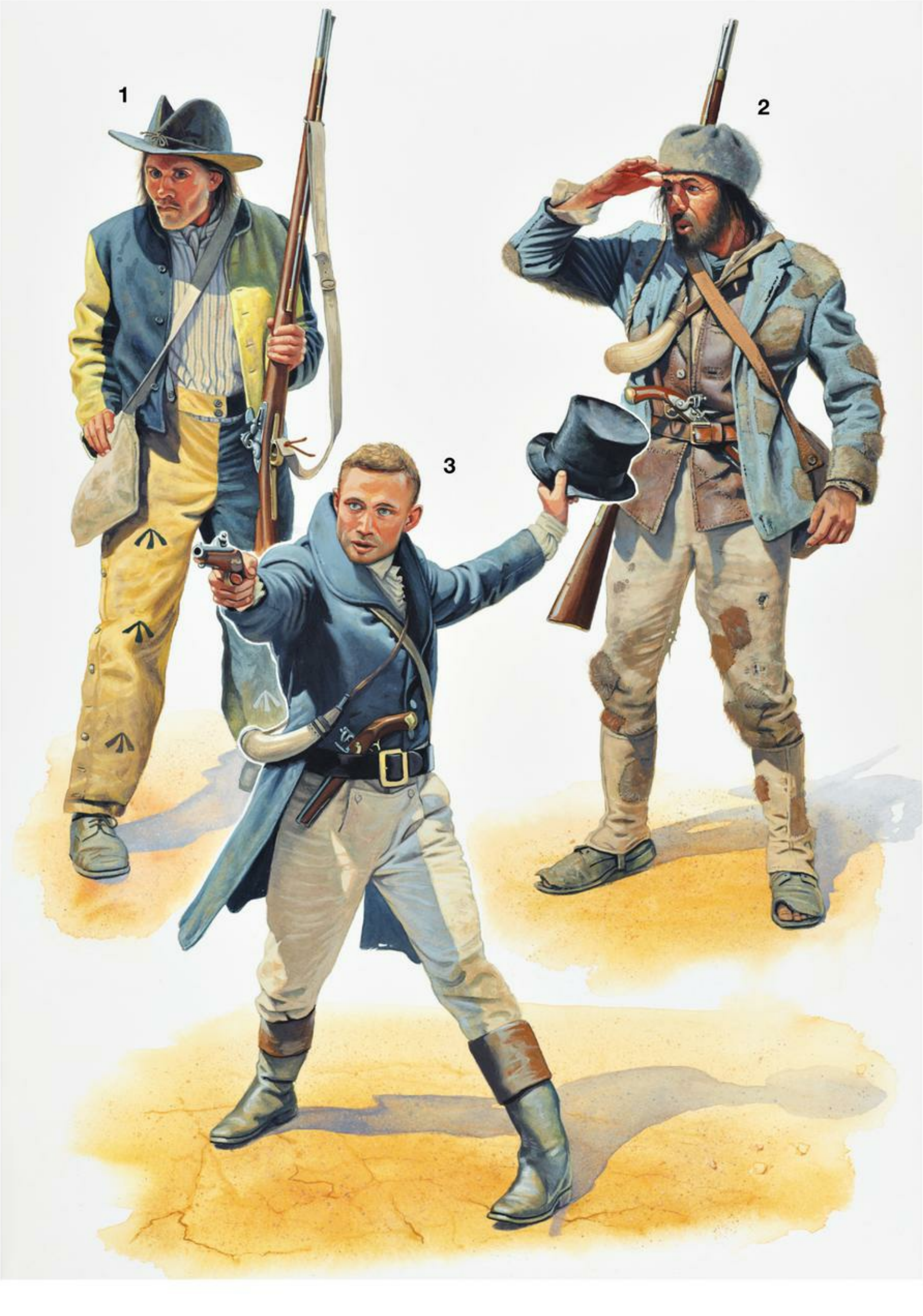
Altogether three civilian hostages had been killed together with three gang members, and several more hostages and policemen were wounded. Ned Kelly survived despite serious bullet wounds to his left arm and foot and many shotgun pellets in his legs. When the fire had burned itself out the bodies of Dan Kelly and Steve Hart were dragged out and photographed before curious onlookers; Joe Byrne's corpse was later trussed upright to be photographed against a door at the Benalla police station.

Once Ned Kelly had recovered from his injuries he was tried in Melbourne for the murder of Constable Lonigan at Stringybark Creek. He was found guilty, and sentenced to death; when his mother was allowed to visit him Ellen admonished him to 'Mind you die like a Kelly, son!' When he was hanged on 11 November 1880 a crowd of some 4,000 gathered at the prison gate.

* * *

Whether the Kelly gang were simple criminals, or luckless products of the inequalities of the selector system, is still debated today. They were not the very last bushrangers – the Kenniff brothers were active horse-thieves in the 1890s, Patrick Kenniff being executed for shooting a constable, while the Aboriginal Governor brothers went on a killing spree in 1900 after years of mistreatment, and took to the bush – but in truth the age of bushranging was already over when the Kelly gang rode into Euroa and Jerilderee. By the early 20th century the bushrangers' true crimes were already being glossed over, allowing them to emerge as symbols of Australia's wild, untameable spirit.

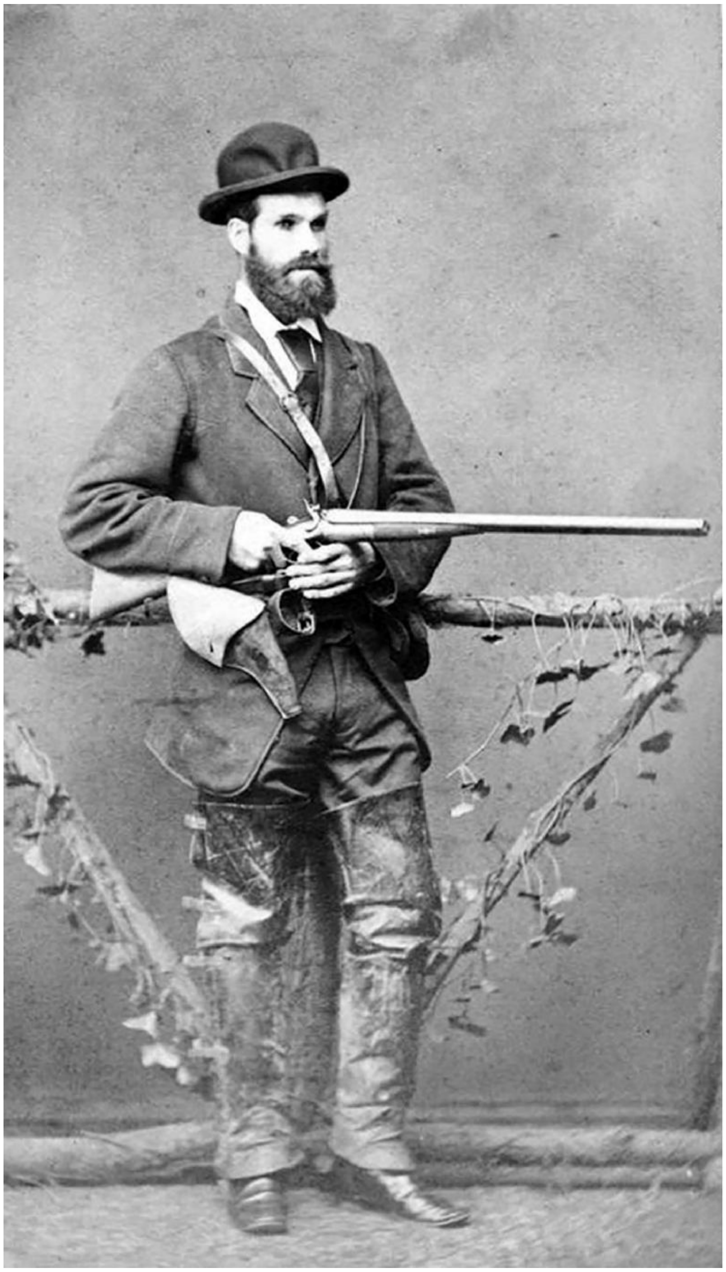
PLATE COMMENTARIES



1: ‘Bolter’, *c*. 1815–20
2: Michael Howe; Van Diemen’s Land, *c*. 1818
3: ‘Bold Jack’ Donohoe, *c*. 1830

A1: 'Bolter', c. 1815–1820
From 1814 a conspicuous uniform was issued to recalcitrant prisoners who committed further offences within the colony. Quartered at first black-and-white and later black-and-yellow, and marked with broad arrows, it buttoned down the outside of the legs to allow for fitting leg-irons. Many absconders had no choice but to continue wearing it until other clothing could be obtained; this man is also wearing the fold-out leather convict hat, a convict shirt and shoes, and has a stolen military-issue India Pattern flintlock musket and a haversack.

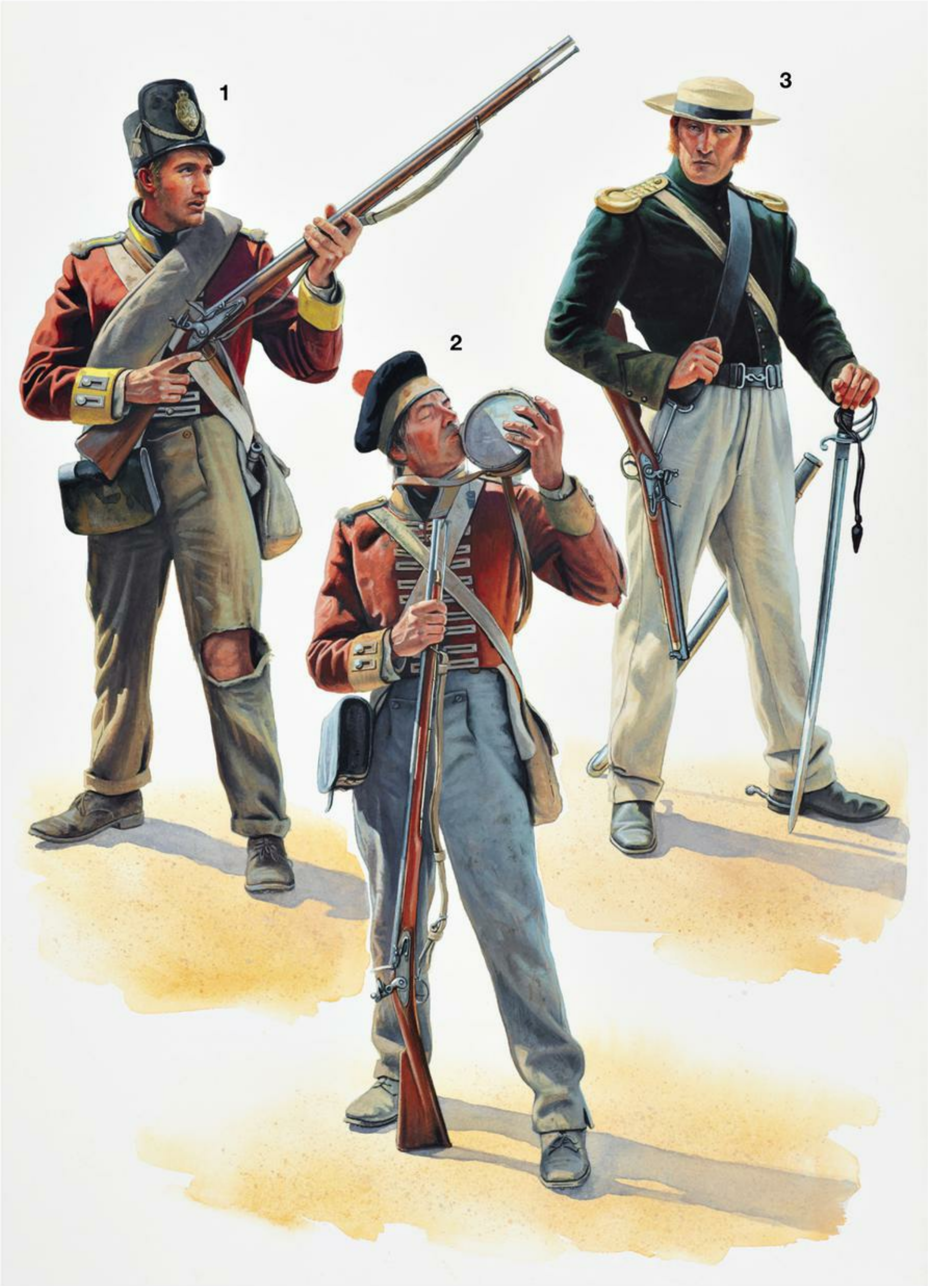
A2: Michael Howe; Van Diemen's Land, c. 1818
For 'bolters' living in the bush clothes were difficult to replace and had to be patched and repaired for as long as possible. A description of this former seaman during the last year of his career describes him as wearing a fustian jacket, moleskin breeches, gaiters and a kangaroo-skin cap, but so heavily patched with kangaroo skin that the original garments could hardly be seen. We reconstruct him as heavily armed, like most early bushrangers, with a 'Brown Bess' musket and at least one flintlock pistol in his belt; he carries shot and possessions in a haversack, and a powder-horn. Eyewitnesses noted his unkempt appearance, and a wildness in his features which was common to most of those who survived long periods living in the bush.



Constable Bracken of the Victoria Mounted Police in the typical costume worn by patrols searching for the Kelly gang – compare with **Plate H1**. Note the leather riding leggings reaching to mid-thigh, and his armament of a 12-bore shotgun and revolver. (State Library of Victoria)

A3: 'Bold Jack' Donohoe, c. 1830

In complete contrast, this most celebrated of the early New South Wales bushrangers paraded his defiance of authority by wearing clothes that mocked the fashionable pretensions of the colonial elite. Twenty-three years old at the time of his death, Donohoe was described as being 5ft 4in tall with a sunburned, freckled complexion, fair hair and blue eyes, and a scar under his nostril. He had a penchant for long tail-coats, fancy shirts and smart boots, and on at least one occasion was reported as wearing a top hat. He was usually armed with a musket, and one or more pistols thrust under his belt.



1: Pte, 46th Regt; Van Diemen’s Land, 1817
2: Pte, 3rd Regt mounted detachment, 1825
3: Trooper, Mounted Police, 1832

B1: Private, 46th Regiment; Van Diemen’s Land, 1817

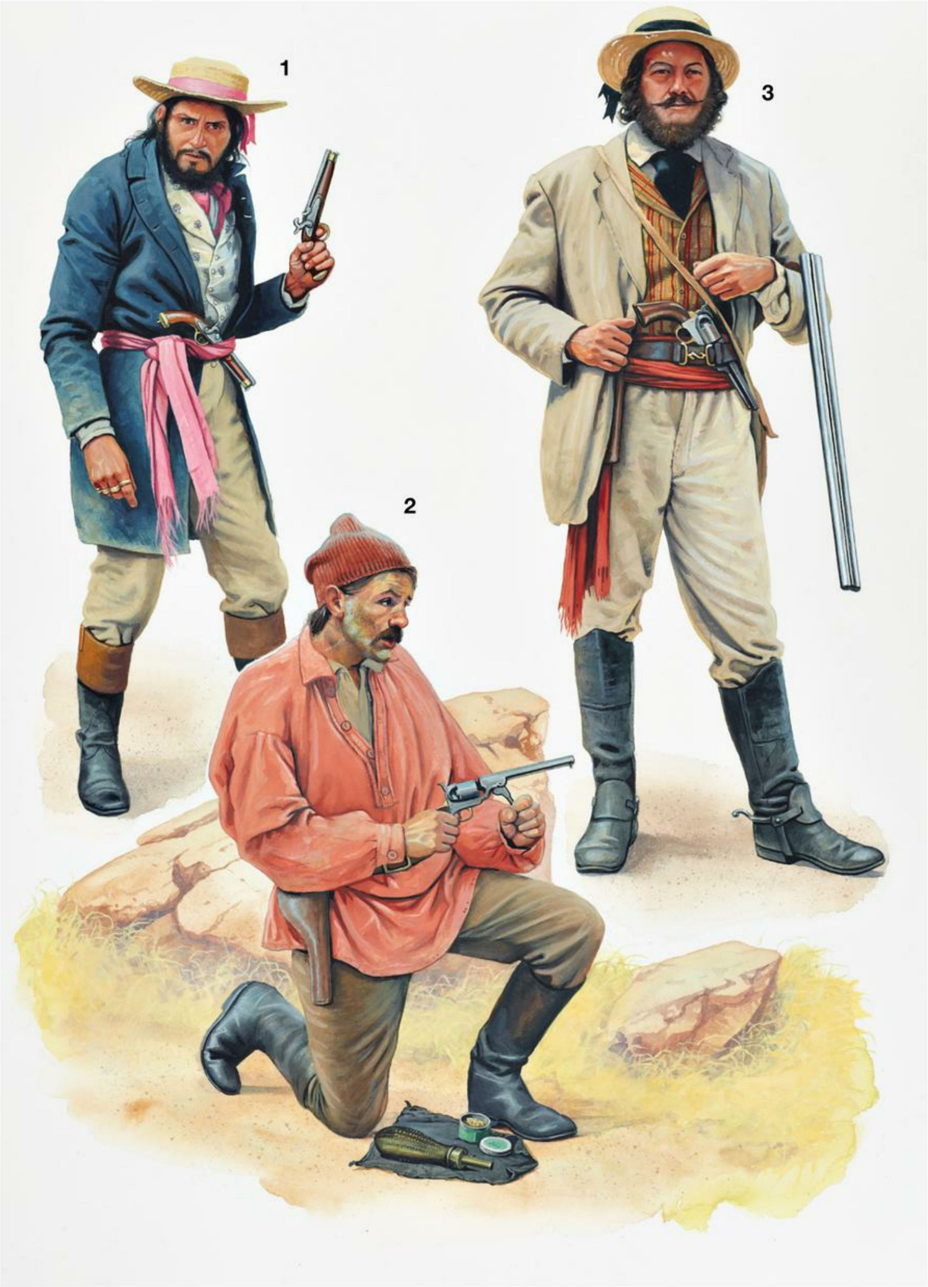
During the heyday of the Howe gang in Van Diemen's Land (1817–18) British infantry made extensive sweeps through the bush, their uniforms and equipment making little concession to the harsh local conditions. This redcoat on a bush patrol wears the 1812 'Belgic' shako and the straight-fronted coatee of *c*. 1808, with the yellow facings and paired lace of the 44th (South Devon) Regt; the tufted shoulder straps identify the battalion companies. Ready for action, he carries a loaded 'Brown Bess' and has pulled the large cartridge pouch of his crossbelt equipment round to the side. He has replaced his worn-out issue trousers with a civilian pair, and instead of his knapsack he is carrying his essential kit in his blanket tied into a horseshoe roll.

B2: Private, 3rd Regiment mounted detachment, 1825

Faced with operating on foot against elusive bushranger bands, LtCol Stewart of the Buffs (East Kent Regt) raised a temporary and experimental 'mounted infantry' element from men of his regiment mounted on government draft horses. There are no detailed descriptions of their appearance, but it seems they wore their usual uniform and carried infantry muskets rather than carbines. Since wearing shakos would have been awkward when riding in the bush, and since later improvised 'mounted infantry' units elsewhere in the Empire wore the more practical forage cap, we have chosen to show it here. We have also speculated that the bayonet belt was not worn.

B3: Trooper, Mounted Police, 1832

The success of the short-lived Buffs mounted detachment prompted the raising of the first dedicated military Mounted Police unit, primarily from among ex-soldiers in the colony. The Mounted Police seem initially to have worn a blue uniform with white facings, but by 1832 they were wearing a Rifle-green stable jacket with detachable shoulder-scales, and either green or white trousers; for bush patrols the usual headgear was this woven-fibre 'cabbage-tree' hat. They were armed with the Paget carbine and a sword, and wore a black leather cartouche (pouch) belt; this suspended a small cartridge pouch behind the body, and the carbine at the right hip by a spring hook to a ring-and-rail.



1: Edward Davis, *c*. 1840
2: Goldfields bushranger, 1850s–1860s
3: Frank Gardiner, *c*. 1862

C1: Edward Davis, c. 1840

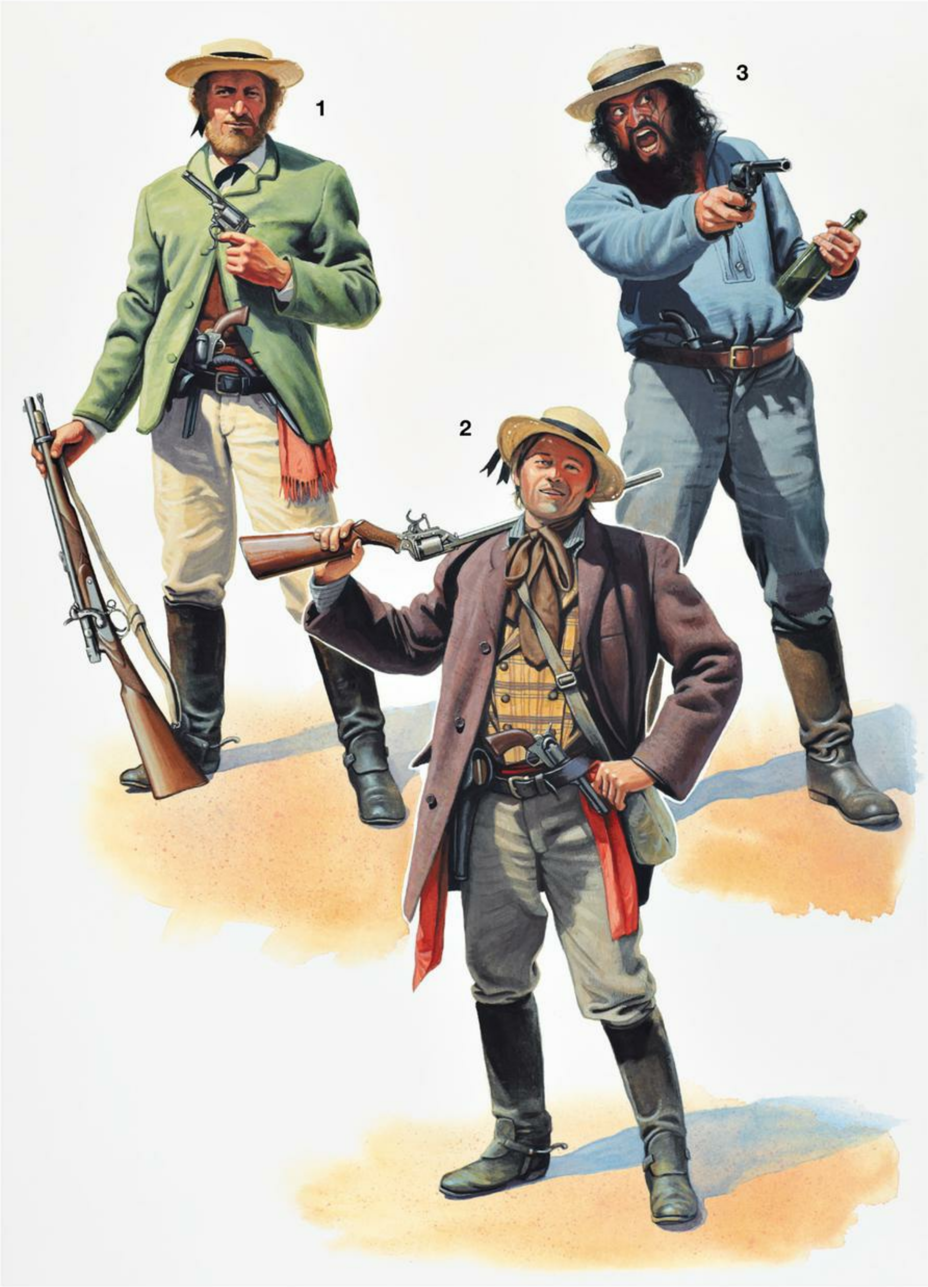
The only known Jewish bushranger continued the tradition established by Donohoe and others of dressing in a flamboyant style. Aged 24 in 1840 when at the height of his notoriety, Davis was slightly built and just 4ft 11in tall, and wore his hair long with a full beard. He sported stolen rings on all his fingers, and was tattooed on both arms: the letters ‘MJDBN’, the word ‘LOVE’ and an anchor inside his left forearm and ‘EDHDM’ inside his right, as well as a series of dots on his left hand which signified time served in prison. He favoured smart coats, waistcoats and boots, and he and his gang decorated themselves and their horse-tack with pink ribbons; we reconstruct him as wearing a waist-sash, which became something of a badge for mid-century bushrangers. Davis is armed with a mismatched pair of the percussion pistols which had begun to appear in Australia in the late 1830s.

C2: Goldfields bushranger, 1850s–1860s

This man is typical of the robbers who emerged during the gold rushes of the early 1850s. He has made some attempt at disguise by smearing his face with ashes, and his clothing follows descriptions of the Gardiner gang who robbed the gold shipment at Eugowra Rocks in 1862. It is basically that of the ‘diggers’ who flocked to Victoria: a loose ‘Crimea’ smock-shirt over a plain white shirt, and a woollen cap, although he might equally wear a woven-fibre hat. He is reloading an 1851 Colt Navy-pattern cap-and-ball revolver, a type which was common in Australia in the 1850s and ’60s.

C3: Frank Gardiner, c. 1862

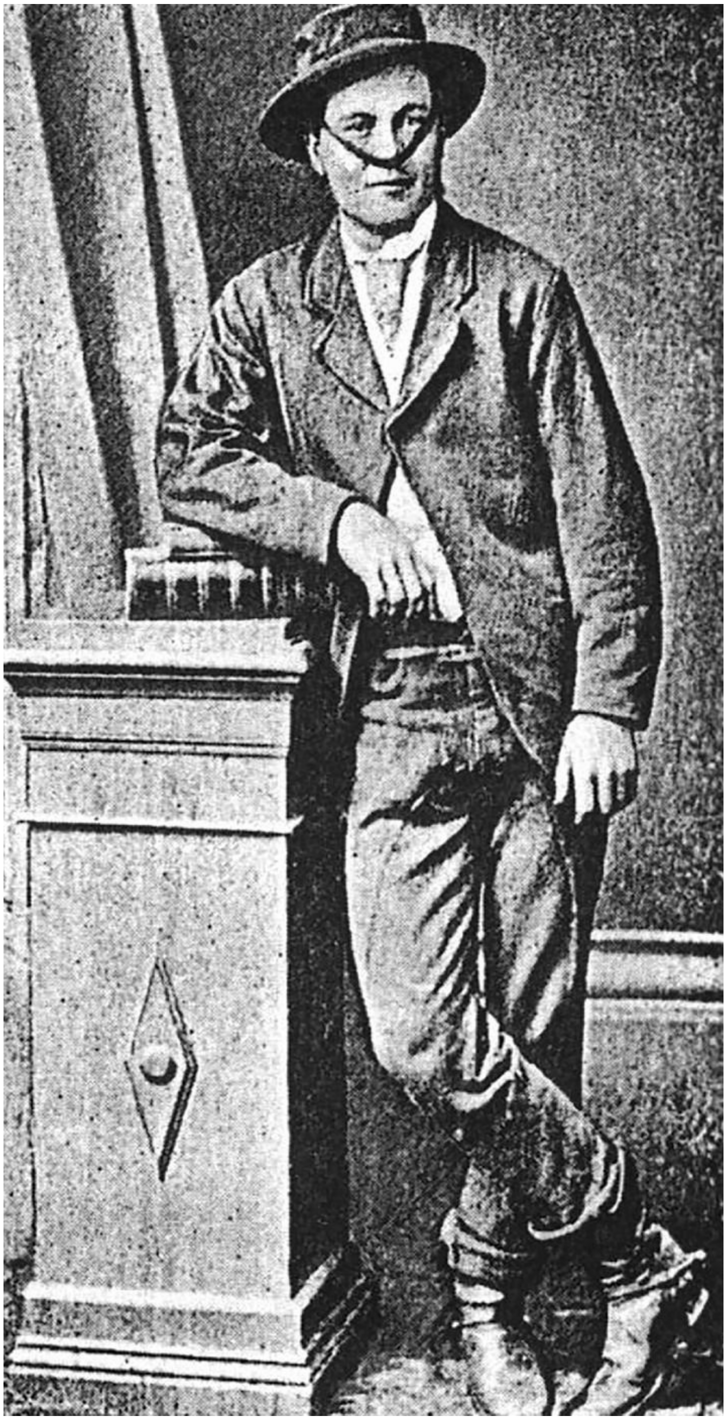
Arguably the most successful of the gold-rush era bushrangers, at the height of his success in 1862 Gardiner was 30 years old, 5ft 9in tall, with a confident manner. A studio portrait shows him with long hair, a fringe beard and styled moustaches, and wearing a smart ‘duck’ linen coat, a waistcoat, an extravagantly tied cravat, and high Wellington-style riding boots. Here he is wearing a ‘cabbage-tree’ hat and a red ribbon and sash, and is armed with an expensive percussion double-barrelled shotgun and a Navy Colt revolver.



1: Ben Hall, *c*. 1863
2: 'Happy Jack' Gilbert, *c*. 1863
3: 'Mad Dan Morgan', *c*. 1864

D1: Ben Hall, c. 1863

Reconstructed here as if showing off his arsenal for a portrait, Gardiner’s protégé Ben Hall was in his late 20s at the time of his death; he was 5ft 9in tall, and perhaps a little overweight despite his life on the run. Here he is wearing the usual woven hat and a ‘sack coat’, worn fashionably with only the top button fastened, over a waistcoat, necktie and sash. Eyewitnesses recalled that his manner was quiet and courteous but that he went heavily armed – in his belts he carried a percussion double-barrelled combination pistol with a dagger blade, and a Navy Colt, but his favourite revolver was the double-trigger Tranter (which was recovered from his body after his death). He carries percussion caps in a small pouch at his waist, and his primary weapon is a police-issue Calisher & Terry carbine.



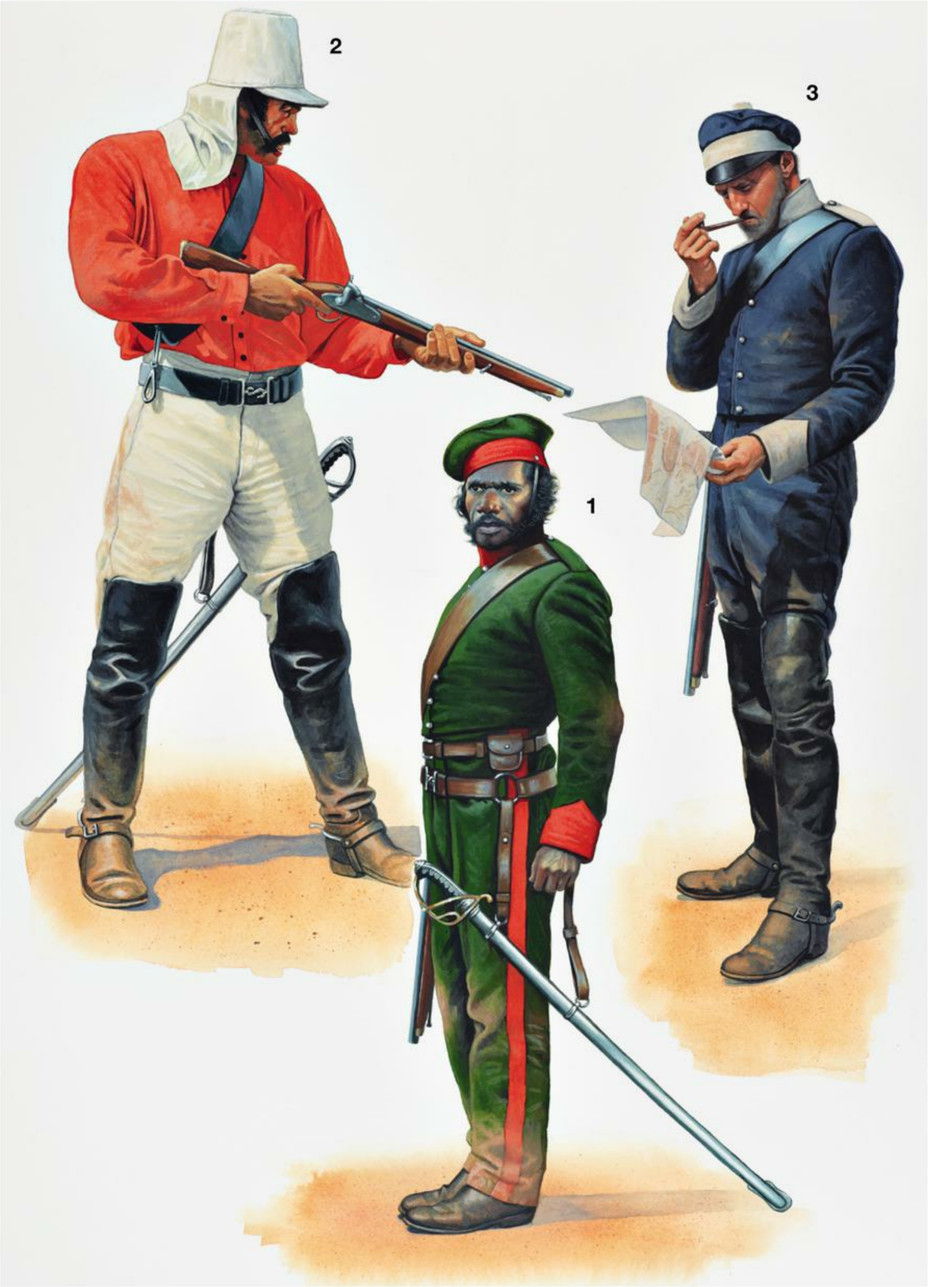
A peripheral member of the 'Greta mob' – the name given to the Kelly gang – wearing his hat in their favoured way, with the chinstrap under the nose. This is thought to be Aaron Sherritt, whose murder by Joe Byrne as a suspected informer was the prelude to the Glenrowan affair. (Public domain/Wikimedia Commons)

D2: 'Happy Jack' Gilbert, c. 1863

The Canadian-born Gilbert was in his early 20s at the height of his fame, 5ft 9in tall and of athletic build. His dress tended towards the 'flash'; contemporary sketches show him clean-shaven and wearing a low 'cabbage-tree' hat, a stylish coat and waistcoat, a flamboyantly-knotted necktie, corduroy trousers and riding boots. He apparently wore scarlet waist-sashes tied at both hips, and we show him wearing an outdoor ‘hunting coat’ against the weather. He carries two Colt Navy revolvers, and a Tranter revolving rifle stolen from a squatter during a raid; this became his favourite weapon, and he was carrying it when he was killed.

D3: ‘Mad Dan Morgan’, c. 1864

Born John Fuller, the man known (subsequently, at least) as ‘Mad Dan’ or ‘Mad Dog Morgan’ was perhaps the most volatile of the gold-rush era bushrangers; he often worked alone, and was renowned for his murderous rages. He was described as an imposing figure, 5ft 10in tall, with long, unkempt dark hair and beard, and a nose that witnesses likened to the beak of a bird of prey. In the photographs taken after his death there is little else to distinguish his appearance – he was wearing an ordinary ‘sack coat’ and trousers – but contemporary sketches depict him wearing a ‘Crimea’ shirt and carrying, among other weapons, both a Tranter and what appears to be a small, transition-period percussion revolver; this reconstruction is based on a surviving example used on the goldfields.



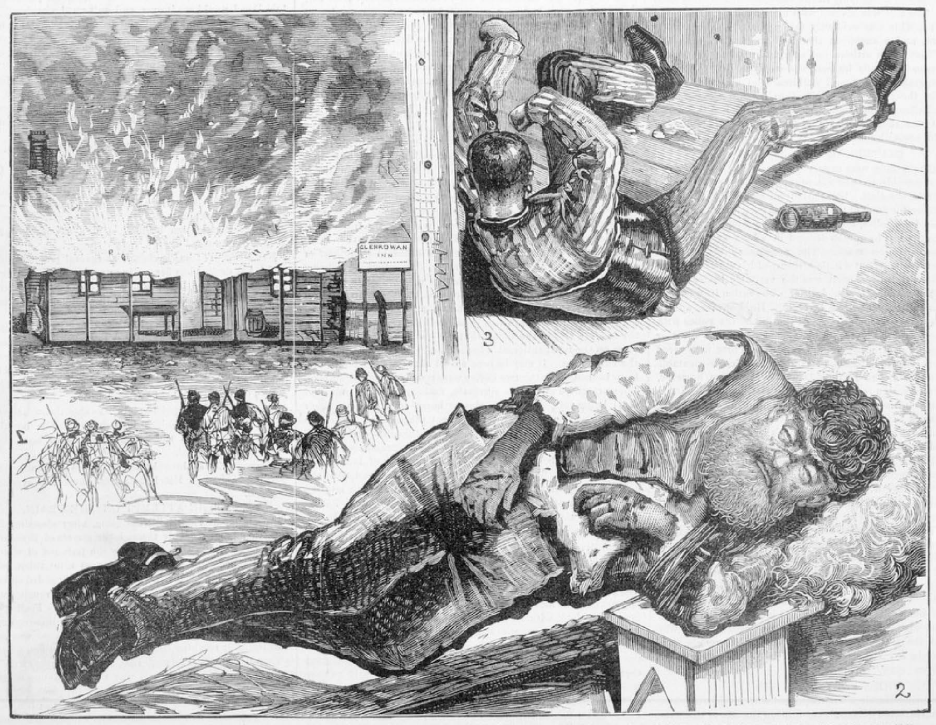
1: Tpr, Native Mounted Police, 1852
2: Pte, 40th Regt gold escort, 1853
3: Tpr, Gold Fields Police, *c*. 1855

E1: Trooper, Native Mounted Police, 1852

The Native Mounted Police were recruited from the Aboriginal population and were intended to police the expanding frontiers of settlement, but in the early gold-rush years they were the only unit available to maintain law and order in the diggings. Although they were only deployed on the goldfields for a few years, they were held in high regard for their tracking skills in pursuit of criminals. They wore a smart dark green uniform of forage cap, stable jacket and reinforced trousers, with red facings and sidestripe. They were armed with a percussion carbine and a sword, slung from brown leather cartouche and waist belts.

E2: Private, 40th Regiment gold escort, 1853

In order to protect the gold shipments travelling from the goldfields to banks in the towns, a detachment of 125 men from the 40th Regt were temporarily mounted for deployment as escorts. Sketches show them wearing a white cover over their Albert-pattern infantry shakos, loose red shirts, off-white trousers and high black knee-boots. They carried a cavalry percussion carbine and a steel-scabbarded sword from black leather belts.

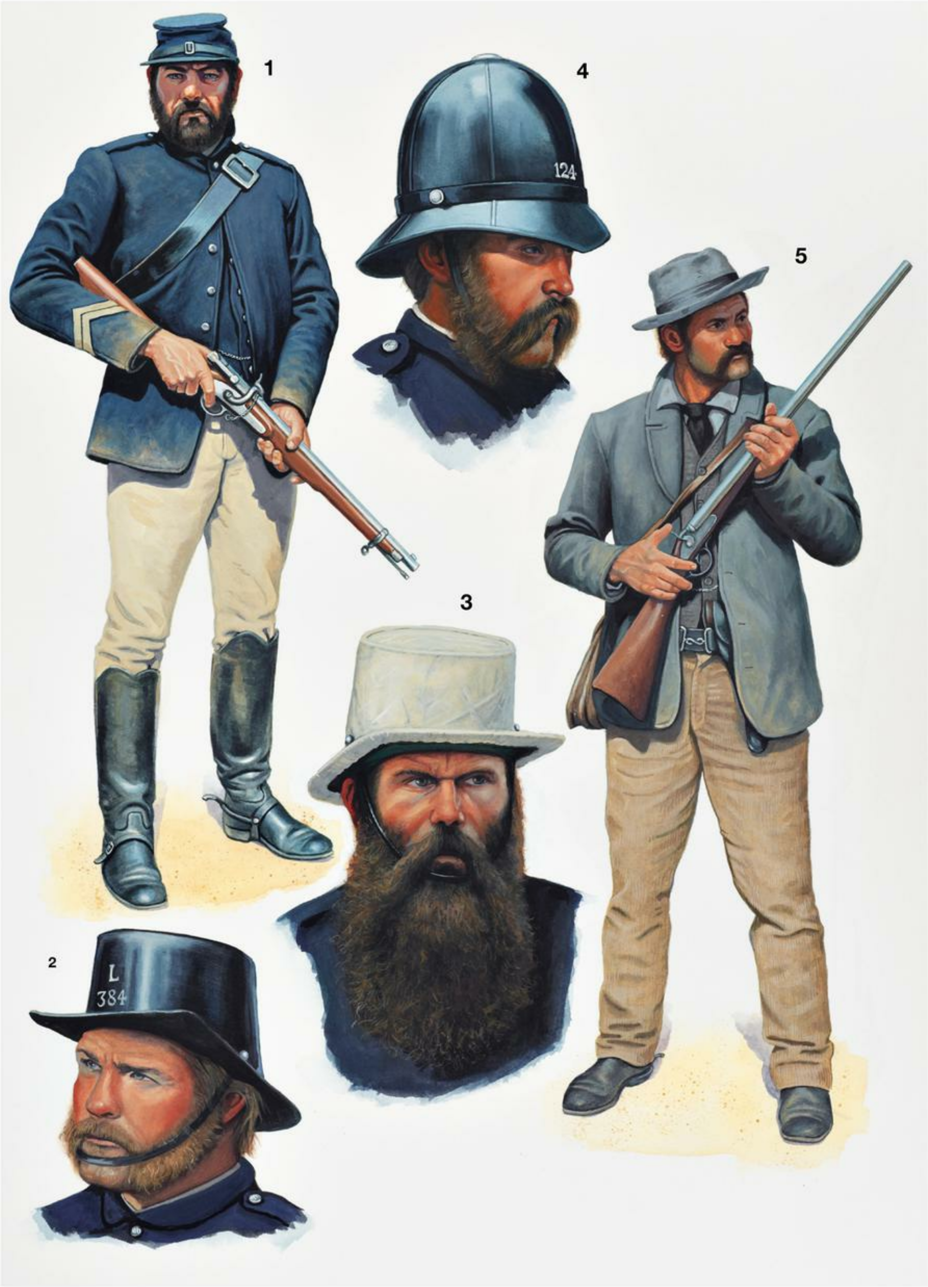


DESTRUCTION OF THE KELLY GANG. DRAWN BY MR. T. CARRINGTON DURING THE ENCOUNTER.
1—SETTING FIRE TO GLENROWAN HOTEL 2—NED KELLY LYING ON BUNK IN STATION-MASTER'S HOUSE. 3—SCENE THROUGH THE DOOR OF THE INN, BYRNE LYING DEAD ON THE FLOOR WHERE HE FELL JUST IN FRONT OF THE BAR.

Newspaper engraving from drawings made in the aftermath at Glenrowan. Police watch as the hotel burns (top left); Joe Byrne's body seen through a window before the fire took hold (top right); and the captured Ned Kelly lying wounded in the stationmaster's house. The artist T. Carrington has paid careful attention to details of his costume – see under **Plate H3**. (State Library of Victoria)

E3: Trooper, Gold Fields Police, c. 1855

From the mid-1850s the new Gold Fields Police – Australia’s first civilian police force, though inevitably recruited largely from ex-soldiers – were deployed to take over law enforcement. They were raised by individual regional magistrates who were responsible for specifying their uniforms. While there is general agreement that they wore peaked forage caps and short blue stable jackets for mounted duties, the period references are sketchy over details; the facings are commonly shown as white, but some may have worn red. Weapons were again a percussion carbine and a sword.



1: Sgt, NSW Mounted Police, *c*. 1862
2: Victoria Mounted Police shako, 1860s
3: Victoria MP shako with summer cover
4: Victoria MP helmet, 1870s
5: Plain-clothes NSW policeman, 1865

F1: Sergeant, New South Wales Mounted Police, c. 1862

In 1862 a new Act introduced a properly constituted police force within both New South Wales and Victoria, replacing the earlier Gold Fields Police. Both colonies adopted the same uniform for mounted duties, apart from the headgear: a loose plain dark blue jacket or 'sack coat', with any rank chevrons (for sergeants two, not three) worn point-up above the right cuff only, off-white riding trousers, and boots. Equipment consisted of a black cartouche belt, and a sword belt worn under the jacket suspending a light-cavalry sword (usually omitted when in the field). The principal weapon was initially an Enfield muzzle-loading percussion carbine, later a breach-loading Snider or, more commonly, a Calisher & Terry carbine. Colt Navy revolvers were issued for special duties, but usually carried in saddle-holsters. The NSW Mounted Police wore a dark blue kepi-style forage cap with black leather peak.

F2: Victoria Mounted Police shako, 1860s

The black leather shako had two linked peaks, squared at the front and rounded at the rear, and displayed painted unit and individual identification.

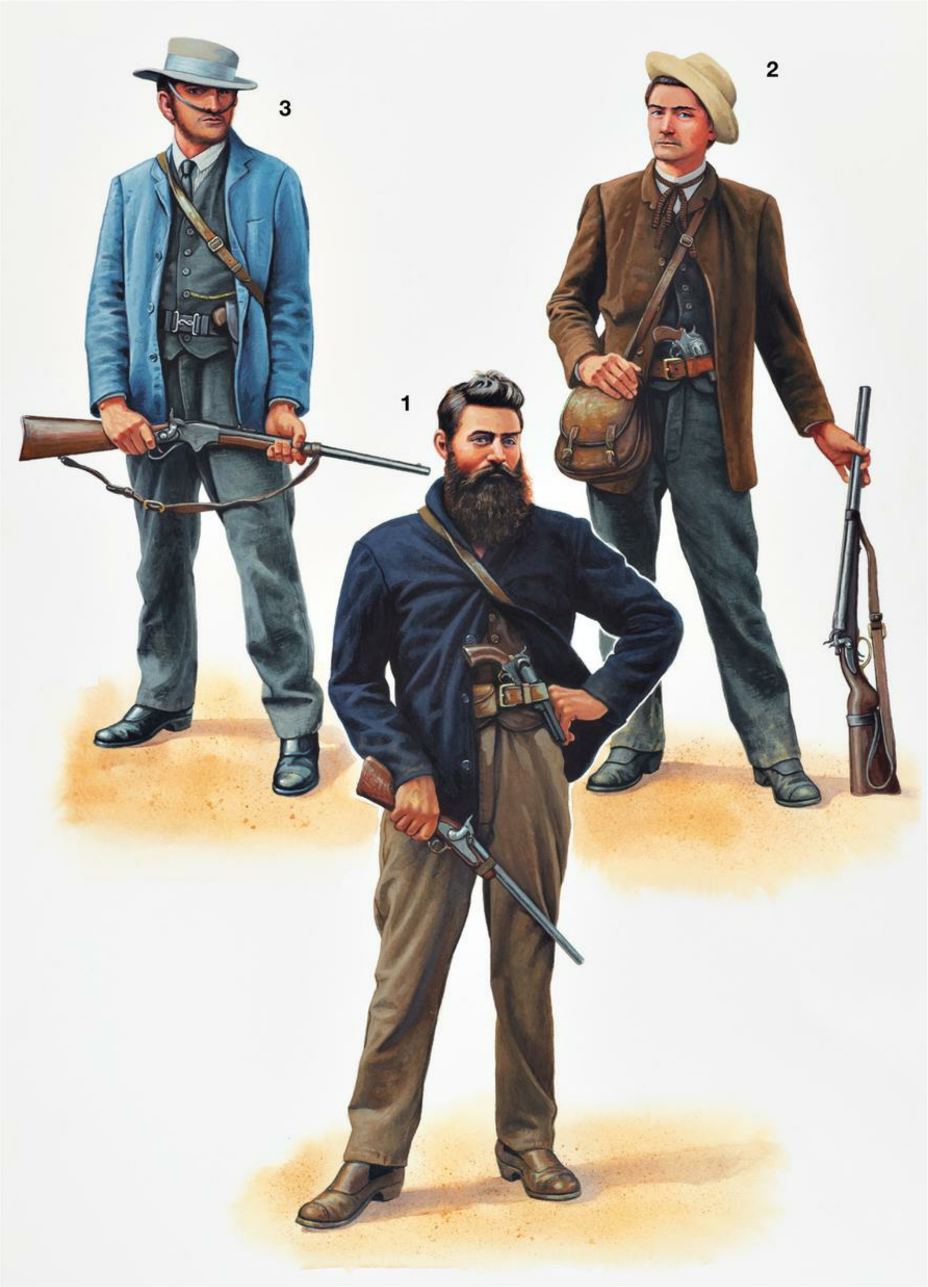
F3: Victoria Mounted Police shako with white summer cover

F4: Victoria Mounted Police helmet, 1870s

In the mid-1870s the Victoria Mounted Police replaced their shako with a tall dark blue helmet based on that worn by the British police. Photographs show that the segmented helmet had a hard lacquered finish, with the officer's number in white metal.

F5: Plain-clothes NSW policeman, 1865

The police patrols deployed against the Hall gang operated largely in plain clothes so as to be less conspicuous in the bush and to the gang's civilian sympathizers, so their appearance hardly differed from that of the outlaws they were chasing (though without the latters' ostentatious touches). This officer wears a felt hat, which was just becoming fashionable in place of the woven-fibre type. The tweed jacket and waistcoat and corduroy trousers are also typical of the period. He is armed with a Navy Colt revolver holstered on a waist belt, and a percussion double-barrelled 12-bore shotgun. Both carbines and shotguns were popular weapons for such operations, and it was with a shotgun such as this that Sub-Inspector James Davidson of the NSW Police first shot Ben Hall during the ambush at Goobang Creek on 5 May 1865.



1: Ned Kelly
2: Dan Kelly
3: Steve Hart

G1: Ned Kelly

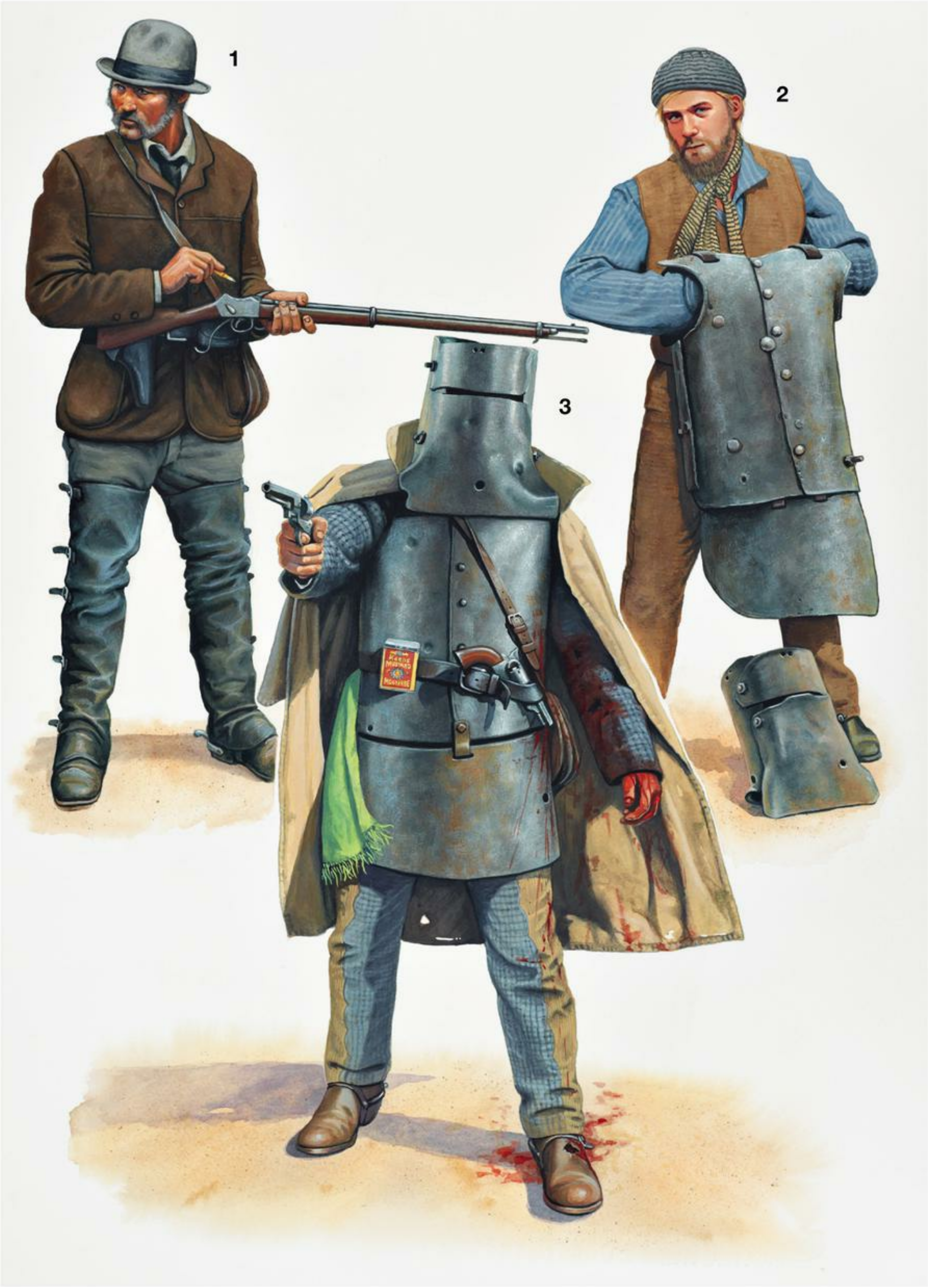
Although the indelible image of the Kelly gang has them in their armour, they in fact wore it only once – during their ‘last stand’ at the Glenrowan Inn. Descriptions of the gang members at the time of the bank robberies at Euroa and Jerilderee suggest that they had smartened themselves up with stolen clothes to pass unnoticed in town. We show Ned bare-headed, but he also wore a felt hat in the ‘Greta mob’s’ idiosyncratic style, with the chinstrap under his nose (see **G3**); a striped grey shirt under a waistcoat and a blue sack coat, and (a flamboyant touch hidden here by his full beard) a lavender necktie. The gang favoured short elastic-sided boots with so-called ‘larrikin’ heels (slang for a young rowdy), which were higher than normal and distinctly wedged; they believed this made it harder for trackers to identify their footprints because it disguised the shoe size. Ned is wearing a leather satchel, and a belt with an attached cap pouch and a Navy Colt thrust into it, and carries a favourite weapon: a percussion carbine with a short sawn-off butt and forestock, the latter reinforced with a wrapping of waxed string.

G2: Dan Kelly

Ned’s younger brother and ardent follower, Dan is described during this period as wearing a fashionable shirt with a detachable collar, a striped necktie, and a ‘Paget’ coat – a three-quarter length jacket tailored in at the waist. Thrust into his belt is the short-barrelled Webley Police-pattern revolver taken from Constable Fitzpartrick during the altercation at the Kelly homestead earlier that year, and he carries the double-barrelled percussion shotgun taken from Sgt Kennedy’s body after the Stringybark Creek killings. By the time of the showdown at Glenrowan the gang are estimated to have gathered an arsenal of 15 revolvers, two double-barrelled shotguns, four single-shot and four repeating rifles, and three carbines in addition to Ned’s old sawn-off weapon.

G3: Steve Hart

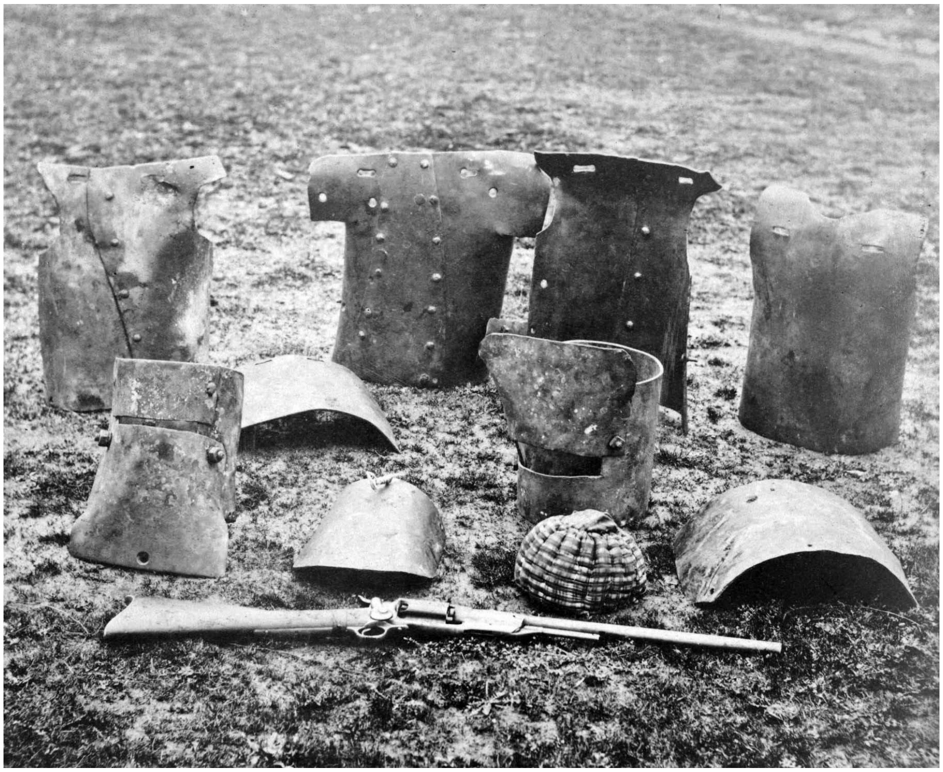
Steve Hart’s taste was said to incline towards the ‘flash’, and he is described as wearing a felt hat in the usual ‘Greta mob’ style, a pinstripe shirt with a white detachable collar, and a blue ‘silk-mix’ Paget coat over a tweed waistcoat and trousers. He has a revolver thrust into his belt, and is carrying a Spencer seven-shot carbine taken from Constable Scanlon at Stringybark Creek. (The Spencer was not police issue, but had been borrowed for that patrol from a police supporter who had carried it on gold escorts.)



1: Plain-clothes police officer
2: Joe Byrne
3: Ned Kelly

H1: Plain-clothes police officer

The policemen who confronted the Kelly gang at Glenrowan were all wearing plain clothes, as they habitually did when out searching for bushrangers. Photographs show them wearing various felt hats, hard-wearing outdoor clothes including this tweed 'Norfolk'-style jacket, and either long boots or, as here, high, buckled leather leggings. Most wore satchels over a shoulder to carry ammunition, and belts with cap pouches and holstered Colt or Webley revolvers. Weapons carried by the police and native police at Glenrowan varied from obsolete Enfield percussion muzzle-loaders to breach-loading Sniders and at least one Winchester repeater, shotguns, and (as here), the powerful single-shot breach-loading Martini-Henry rifle. This was then considered a state-of-the-art weapon, and the Kelly gang used one to test the resistance of their armour. None of these weapons were able to penetrate it, and the gang-members' wounds were all to their limbs.



Some of the Kelly gang's armour displayed after the fight: breast- and back-plates, and two helmets. The differing suits also had suspended belly-plates, and Ned's armour included separate shoulder-guards. The quilted cap worn by Ned under his helmet can be seen in the foreground, above the Colt revolving rifle that he used early in the shoot-out. (State Library of Victoria)

H2: Joe Byrne

Each of the gang wore armour at Glenrowan; it had taken mouldboards from at least 20 ploughs to make all four suits and, although the pattern was similar, because they were individually made no two were exactly the same. The armour was heavy – Ned’s weighs more than 88lb (40kg) – and cumbersome. Photographs of Joe Byrne’s body after the fight show him to have worn a striped shirt and narrow scarf; Ned Kelly wore a quilted skullcap under his helmet, but it is not clear if the other three gang members did the same. Byrne’s sidearm was a police-issue Webley revolver.

H3: Ned Kelly

The most iconic image in the history of Australian bushrangers – Ned Kelly’s ‘last stand’. At the beginning of the fight he seems to have been carrying a Colt revolving rifle, but as the gang exchanged shots with the police from the hotel veranda he was badly wounded in his left arm; it was apparently crooked to support his rifle when a bullet passed through both his forearm and upper arm. He was later shot again in the left foot. Under his armour he was wearing a white shirt with a pattern of small blue hearts, a waistcoat and grey tweed jacket, and buff corduroy trousers with distinctive scallop-edged blue-grey tweed reinforcement on the inner legs. Around his waist he was wearing a green sash presented to him when, as a youth, he had saved a boy from drowning. When he emerged from the bush to engage the police he had a long waterproof coat thrown over his shoulders, and was firing a Navy Colt revolver; his belt supported both a Colt Pocket revolver and a Keen’s Mustard tin in which he kept ammunition. Over one shoulder he was wearing a brown leather satchel (illustrated with G2); this still exists, and is stained with his blood.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

IAN KNIGHT is widely acknowledged as a leading authority on the colonial campaigns of the Victorian Empire. He has written extensively on the subject including several Men-at- Arms, Campaign, Essential Histories, Elite and Fortress titles for Osprey, including the Queen Victoria’s Enemies series. He has worked on a number of television documentaries and is a founder member of the Victorian Military Society. He has received awards for his work on campaigns in southern Africa during the 19th century, notably the Anglo-Zulu War. He lives in West Sussex, UK.

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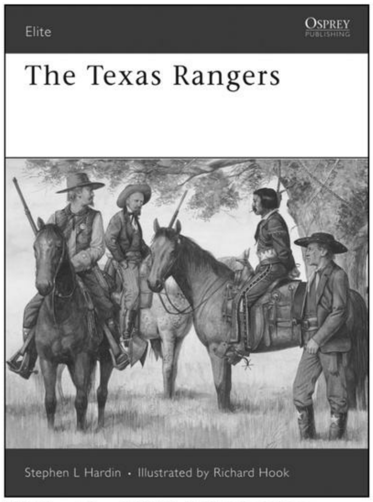
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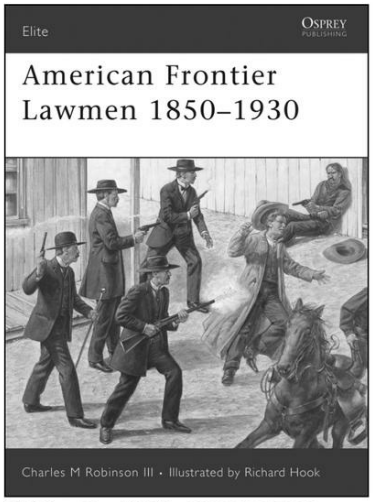
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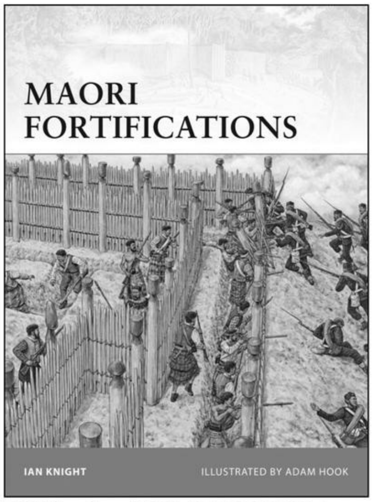
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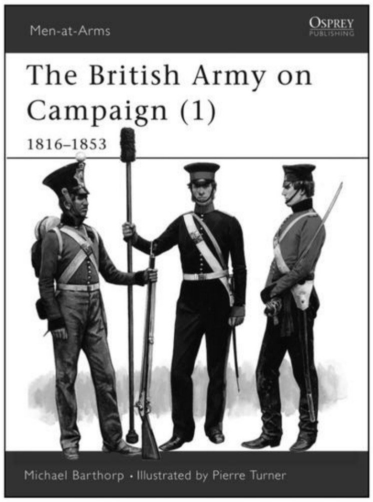
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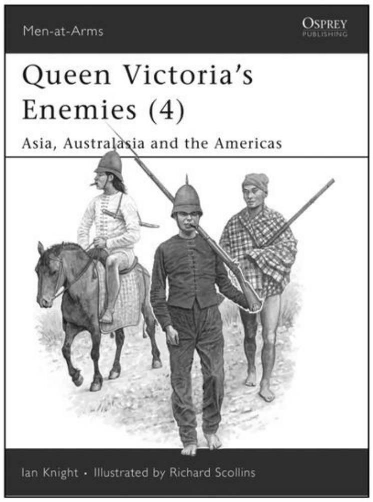
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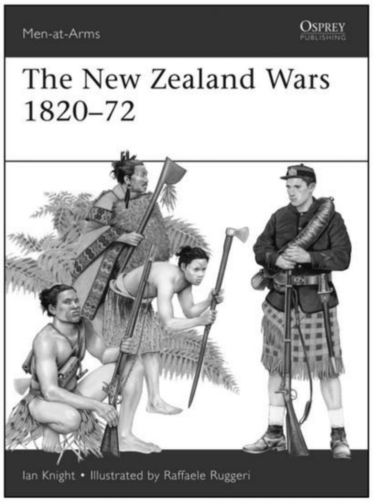
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AUTHOR'S NOTE & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The story of the Australian bushrangers is deeply wrapped in myth and folkore. Many of their adventures have been passed down in oral tradition, often borrowing elements from anti-heroes before them. The literature on the subject is immense; this title cannot hope to offer anything more than an idea of how men on both sides of the law looked and were armed.

There are a number of excellent websites for those seeking to know more; for Ben Hall try **www.benhallaustralianbushranger.com**, and for Ned Kelly **www.ironoutlaw.com**. I have found the well-researched and wide-ranging essays in **https://aguidetoaustralianbushranging.wordpress.com** particularly useful.

ARTIST'S NOTE

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The publishers regret that they can enter into no correspondence upon this matter.